

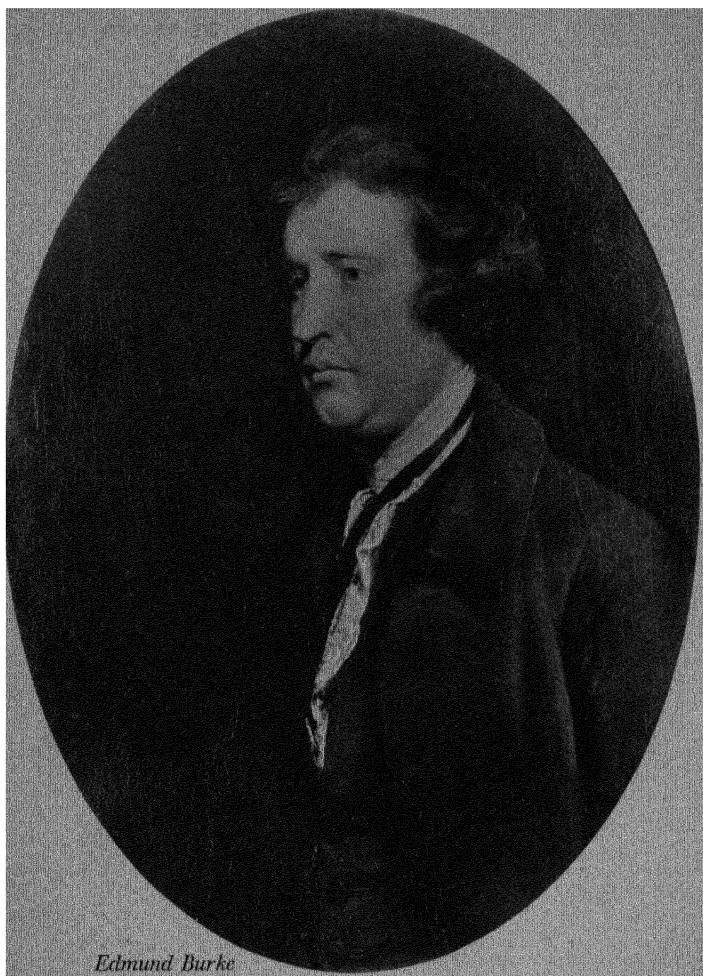
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EDMUND BURKE



Edmund Burke

EDMUND BURKE

A Life

by

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS



JOHN MURRAY

Albemarle Street London

Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd , Frome and London

TO THE DEAR MEMORY OF MY FATHER,
LAURIE MAGNUS

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* From the picture by Reynolds at Milton, Peterborough.

† This and the seven illustrations following are from contemporary cartoons in the British Museum.

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Preface

EDMUND BURKE'S career in politics affords many parallels with that of John Wesley in religion. Politics and religion were both, comparatively speaking, moribund during the eighteenth century ; the fires of controversy which had swept the country during the previous century had burned very low, and a peace which was barely distinguishable from indifference had succeeded. Burke restored to English political life a foundation in faith, and in principle. Like Wesley he worked in and through the existing institutions of his age, but he finished his life, as Wesley did, outside them. Wesley's enthusiasm carried him beyond the confines of the Church of England : Burke's zeal left the great exponent of the system of Party Government isolated from both Whigs and Tories. Burke's character during his lifetime was a subject of controversy, and for many years he was the victim of a Press campaign of almost incredible scurrility. His friends, the Rockingham Whigs, loved to represent their idol as a model of immaculate perfection ; his enemies did not scruple to accuse him of political adventureship, financial corruption, religious hypocrisy, sexual perversion and mental disorder. All his life Burke remained a lovable and human figure, and towards its close he became a kind of power in Europe. Even to-day he is far more frequently quoted than any other English statesman. Burke towered like an intellectual giant over the heads of his contemporaries, but it was well known that there were flaws in his greatness. His judgment, which was founded on an immense wealth of knowledge, was not

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kept strictly under control ; it was liable at any moment to be upset by the extraordinary intensity of his emotions. Burke recommended prudence as the sole criterion of wisdom in all affairs of public policy, but in the conduct of his private life he showed, despite his excessive reticence, that he was deficient in some of the elementary forms of prudence. In his public life Burke showed himself too ready to identify his whole being with whatever object was engaging his attention at the moment. It was this weakness, divined and exploited by Philip Francis, which led Burke into the excesses which marred his conduct of the Impeachment of Warren Hastings. The most urgent need of his nature was always some great cause to serve—some monstrous injustice to repair. The appalling abandon with which he flung himself into such causes led him to squander no inconsiderable part of his magnificent integrity of purpose. But the impression which is left on the mind by Burke's career is not one of vanity or futility : it is rather an impression of wonder at the prodigality of his great gifts ; of pity and awe for the manner in which those gifts were sometimes displayed ; of pride in the mysterious and terrible potentialities of that human nature of which we all form a part, and which seems in many respects more noble for being shared with him.

I want to express my thanks to Earl Fitzwilliam for allowing me to use the Burke papers at Wentworth Woodhouse for the purpose of this biography, and to Mr. Thomas Wentworth-Fitzwilliam for allowing me to use the Burke papers at Milton and to reproduce his portraits by Reynolds of Edmund, William and Richard Burke.* Access to the archives at Wentworth Woodhouse is a

* Approximately three-quarters of the papers are at Wentworth Woodhouse and one-quarter at Milton. In addition to the Burke

PREFACE

jealously guarded privilege which has so far not been accorded to the Historical Manuscripts Commission: no previous biographer of Burke has been allowed access to his papers. Burke's papers were bequeathed by his widow, at her death in 1812, to three of her husband's political associates and friends—the second Earl Fitzwilliam, the Rt. Hon. William Elliot, and Walker King (Bishop of Rochester). Elliot died in 1818, and King in 1828. The papers were then left in the sole care of Fitzwilliam, who survived until 1833. They were used for the sixteen-volume octavo edition of Burke's writings, which was completed in 1828, and they formed the basis of the four-volume edition of his Correspondence, which was discreetly edited by the third Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke in 1844. This edition of Burke's Correspondence was formed upon the curious plan of publishing only such letters as had not previously been printed elsewhere, but a very substantial proportion of the papers remains to this day unpublished, uncatalogued and apparently forgotten.

I should like to thank Lt.-Col. J. W. B. Landon, D.S.O., for kindness and hospitality at various times when I was in Yorkshire, and I am very grateful to Mr. Christopher Hobhouse for constant encouragement while I was writing this book, and for his kindness in examining for me, while he was in New York, all the unpublished MSS. relating to Burke in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

53a, PALL MALL.

P. M.

May, 1939.

papers there is a large collection of Rockingham and Fitzwilliam papers at Wentworth Woodhouse, and a small collection of Fitzwilliam papers at Milton. From these papers also I drew material.

CHAPTER ONE

The Youth of a Prophet

EDMUND BURKE was pure Irish. He was born in a house on Arran Quay, Dublin, on New Year's Day,¹ 1729. It was the year in which Voltaire returned to Paris from a three years' exile in England, and in which Montesquieu arrived in London from Paris for a two years' stay. Both these events were charged with significance for the future of the infant Burke. The junction between French and English thought was the fundamental fact of the eighteenth century: from the solution which resulted the French Revolution was the delayed but inevitable precipitate. After the victories of Marlborough, and the defeat of Louis XIV, the French had made up their minds that English liberty was the secret of English success. In the hope of restoring their fortunes they set themselves the task of learning everything they could about the nature and principles of that liberty which had triumphed in so spectacular a manner over the despotic Grand Monarchy of Louis Quatorze. The leading writers of France began to read and to speak English; English writers and philosophers enjoyed an unprecedented vogue in Paris; and the only result was to accelerate the slippery plunge of the old order in France into the abyss of bankruptcy and revolution.

The one principle of English liberty which Voltaire and Montesquieu succeeded in introducing into France was that of freedom of speech. The main prescription

THE YOUTH OF A PROPHET

of English liberty, being native to the island air, eluded them, but freedom of speech on the lips of a sceptical and witty people acted as a powerful solvent. By the middle of the century atheism had become fashionable, while the English triumphs under Chatham during the Seven Years War seemed to confirm the French in their view of the superiority of English methods. At this point the intellectuals began to grow tired of tilting at Christianity and the corps of lecherous and mercenary prelates. They focussed their attention upon the State in which they lived, and directed the full force of their artillery on to the political institutions of France. During the eighteenth century human beings were considered in the abstract, and national differences were little understood. It was felt that if certain institutions of government had proved successful in England they must be good for France also, and for all civilized peoples. As the century advanced, the ferment of speculation which had been released in France began to seep backwards across the Channel. It was carried home by English visitors who were constantly being lionized in Paris, and who almost all, with the exception of Burke, expressed unqualified admiration for the wit and grace and glitter of the life of the Paris salons. In this way the new enlightenment was soon enabled to strike root in England. It found a ready field in the bewildered proletariat which was being torn up from its ancient village ways in the initial stages of the Industrial Revolution ; and it discovered powerful allies in the pulpits and traditions of some of the leaders of English Dissent. This is the background against which the history of the eighteenth century needs to be viewed, for Burke was destined to lead a revolt against the main current of the intellectual life of his age. It was his revolt against the eighteenth century which lent unity

A PROPHET OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

and direction to Burke's life, but the battle went against him. Burke was overborne, not by the superior arguments of his antagonists, for he was a far more profound thinker than they. He was defeated in the end by the remorseless pressure of forces over which no one living in the eighteenth century, or in the century which followed, had any control. Throughout the latter part of the century the Industrial Revolution was ceaselessly at work, undermining every buttress of the old order of which Burke had come forward as the prophet. In place of its former illusion of stability, the social and political framework began increasingly to take on the appearance of a series of dissolving views. It is impossible to appreciate the significance of Burke's career unless it is recognized that his genius was that of a prophet. He was a prophet of the old order in Europe ; he laid claim to revelation ; and in his speeches and writings he left behind him a political testament. Burke held that the world, with all the institutions which it contained, was a direct, mysterious manifestation of God's providence, into the inner nature of which it would be impious to enquire too closely. He saw through the fallacies of the Frenchmen's argument that national differences were of little account. He considered, on the contrary, that they were of supreme importance, because God had ordained them. Every institution in the world was divinely sanctioned, but Burke reserved his deepest reverence for the Constitution of Britain, as it had emerged from the Revolution Settlement of 1688. Burke worshipped the Revolution Settlement with every fibre of his being. He regarded the fortuitous result of King James's folly and abdication as the most important revelation of divine goodness which had been vouchsafed to mankind since the events recorded in the New Testament. He dedicated his

THE YOUTH OF A PROPHET

life to the propagation of this belief, and he argued that any imperfections which the British Constitution might contain were not of the essence of its nature. They were of minor importance—a reflection of the imperfect natures of men.

It was from behind this impregnable bastion of Platonic idealism that Burke looked out upon the world. The Ireland into which he was born provided a searching test for any man's faith in the existence of a divine plan behind human government. Ireland, during the eighteenth century, was the worst-governed country in Europe, although the English aristocracy which was established there displayed an instinct for beauty and distinction which has rarely, in these islands, been surpassed. The English made Dublin the second city of the Empire—a superb capital, whose stately buildings bear witness to this day to the taste and character of the men who dwelt in them. But the English did not restrict their presence to Dublin: they spread themselves over the entire countryside. In every Irish county English noblemen and squires were occupied in planting avenues, laying out gardens, and building pleasant Palladian mansions by means of Irish labour, on land which in many cases had recently been confiscated by Act of Parliament from its native proprietors, and which was to be supported in future on a mounting tide of Irish rents. While the dispossessed Irish swarmed in their cabins at the gates, the English conquerors, divided from the natives by a racial and religious gulf, developed a haughtiness and a pride of caste which was scarcely paralleled elsewhere. In many districts the actual owners of the soil were regarded by the mass of the population as tenants under a wrongful title; yet their manner towards the native Irish was comparable only with that adopted on the opposite side of the

ORIGINS

Atlantic by the cotton-planters of Virginia towards their negro slaves. The English in Ireland disported themselves like princes ; they were the monarchs of all that they surveyed. They professed the most profound contempt for the natives among whom they dwelt, and brought the lash down carelessly on Irish backs at the slightest sign of disrespect. With the aid of a special " Penal " Code the Catholic religion of the vast majority of Irishmen was ruthlessly trodden underfoot. Since land was the main source of power, the object of the Code was to secure as quickly as possible the transference to Protestants of all land which remained in Catholic hands. Politically, professionally, socially, Catholics were excluded ; their bishops were outlawed ; their schools suppressed ; their participation in industry limited by a law which forbade them to employ more than two apprentices in any trade other than that of linen-weaving.

Such were the conditions in which Edmund Burke began to learn the grammar of politics and of Empire. His mother was a Catholic who never changed her faith, although her husband professed himself a Protestant. Edmund's father, Richard Burke, came of a family which had long been merged in the Celtic population of the country. He was at one time the best-known attorney of his day in Dublin, but his practice fell off before he died, as a result of his uncertain temper.² Richard Burke was a shrewd man of the world, who was not disposed to trouble himself overmuch about religion.³ His three sons, Garret, Edmund, Richard, were brought up as Protestants ; his daughter, Juliana, followed her mother's religion. Richard Burke came to Dublin from the South, from Ballyduff in County Cork, where his wife's family, the Nagles, had been settled from time immemorial. Edmund Spenser had

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lived in that neighbourhood while he was writing the early books of *The Faerie Queene* ; his son, Sylvanus Spenser, had married a great-aunt of Burke's mother, and Edmund was named after the poet. When he was six years old Edmund was sent away from Dublin, to Ballyduff, where he spent five extremely happy years. He attended a Catholic village school, and returned to Dublin in 1740. A year later, together with both his brothers, he was sent as a boarder to Ballitore School, some twenty-eight miles from Dublin. The school was kept by Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, who had founded it fifteen years before. Shackleton knew how to develop the characters by winning the affections of his boys, and Edmund learned to love and honour him. With the headmaster's son, Richard Shackleton, who was his contemporary at Ballitore, Edmund formed a close schoolboy friendship which lasted as long as they lived.⁴ There was nothing otherwise remarkable about his schooldays, and he left after three years, in April, 1744, to enter Trinity College, Dublin.

Burke's career at Trinity was not especially distinguished, although he belonged to a set which took itself very seriously. He won a classical scholarship in 1746 which gave him rooms in College, and he must have been thankful to get away from home. His friends used to complain that he was never allowed out in the evenings,⁵ and he suffered considerably from his father's ill-humours. Burke's methods of study were somewhat irregular. He used to fling himself with immense enthusiasm first into one subject and then into another. While the mood was on him he could think of little else, and he complained⁶ laughingly to Dick Shackleton of the excesses into which he had fallen while he was subject successively to the "Furor Mathe-

maticus," the "Furor Logicus," the "Furor Historicus," and the "Furor Poeticus." He said that he found the poetical madness as hard to cure as the itch. In April, 1747, Burke's name was entered as a student at the Middle Temple, in London, nearly a year before he took his degree. Seven years had to elapse at that time between a student's admission and his call to the Bar. There is reason to think ⁷ that Burke occasionally did a little work in his father's office, and it was no uncommon practice for budding barristers to read in an attorney's office, in days before the modern system of reading in another barrister's chambers had been begun. In the same year, 1747, Burke played a leading part in founding a Debating Club,⁸ which became the parent of the Trinity College Historical Society. He used to censure his fellow-members rather freely and was told ⁹ on one occasion that he was "damned absolute"; he was also accused ¹⁰ of scurrility. He took his degree in February, 1748, at a time when he was producing a short-lived literary weekly, which he called *The Reformer*. This paper was edited, managed and almost entirely written by Burke, but it excited no interest; thirteen brief numbers ¹¹ appeared between January and April, 1748. Later in the year Burke tried his hand as a political pamphleteer. A well-known doctor named Lucas offered himself at a by-election as a representative of the City of Dublin in the Irish House of Commons. Between 1727 and 1760 there was no dissolution of the Irish Parliament, and a by-election, therefore, was a considerable event. Lucas caused great excitement by demanding the recognition of Irish legislative independence. He protested against English restrictions on the Irish woollen trade, and denounced parliamentary and municipal corruption. Threatened with arrest as an agitator, Lucas fled to England, and was formally voted

THE YOUTH OF A PROPHET

an enemy to his country in order to prevent his return. In connection with this disgraceful business Burke published ¹² no less than seven anonymous pamphlets—all of them in vindication of Lucas and the principles for which Lucas stood. In one of the last of these pamphlets, Burke broke a lance with Bolingbroke, who had urged that a Royal dictatorship would provide the cure for British ills and the best assurance of good government. Burke retorted ¹³ that it was foolish to rely too much on any human institution, since Parliaments and dictators were equally liable to be corrupt.

Burke's father may have felt that his son was frittering away his time, playing at literature and politics in Dublin. Edmund was the only one of his three sons who had gone to the University, and the highest hopes, naturally, were entertained of his success. Early in 1750, when he was in his twenty-first year, Edmund left Dublin to begin eating his dinners in London. At that time students at the Bar were expected to pick up what they could by hanging about the Courts in Westminster Hall; the books available for study were few and unsatisfactory. Burke complained ¹⁴ bitterly that the study of the Law, which ought to be the chief science in any well-ordered community, was in England rendered hateful to all liberal minds by the medieval barbarity of its method and expression. It did not take him long to understand that he was unsuited by temperament to succeed as a barrister; but the need to earn a living remained urgent. His father, who spent in all about a thousand pounds ¹⁵ in establishing and maintaining him in the Temple, was looking eagerly for results. If he abandoned the Law there were two obvious directions in which he could look: the first was literature, for which he believed that he possessed some ability; the second was commerce, in which he had the advantage of a few

connections in England and abroad.¹⁶ The growth of the reading public and the better organization of the book trade made it possible at that time, though difficult, for a writer to earn a competence. The days of patronage were virtually ended, and great men no longer thought it a part of *noblesse oblige* to patronize authors, or procure them Government sinecures. Only if a writer made himself politically indispensable to some great man was he likely to receive any reward. In these circumstances Burke was for a time very doubtful as to the course which he should pursue. In an old commonplace belonging to this period of his life, he jotted¹⁷ down a pregnant sentence: "To have the mind a long time in doubts and uncertainties may have the same effect on our understandings that fermentation has on liquors. It disturbs them for a while, but it makes them the sounder and clearer ever after."

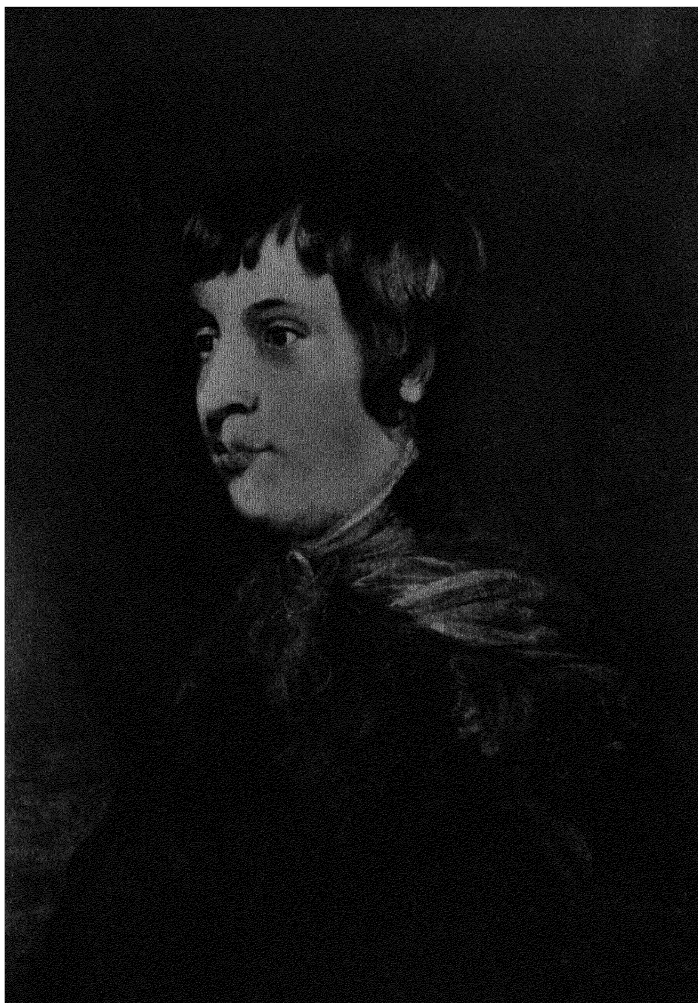
Such, at any rate, was the case with Burke. His philosophy was not the product of the closet. He was an immersed political thinker whose genius was allowed to ripen slowly in the great mart and exchange of everyday human life. During his first year in England Edmund contracted three friendships which became of the greatest importance to him. The first was with William Burke, who was no near relation, though he was often dignified by the name of "kinsman." The other two were with Christopher Nugent, an Irish Catholic doctor practising in Bath, and his daughter Jane, whom Burke subsequently married.

William Burke was a sinister and disreputable figure who later found it necessary to leave the country. Edmund was intimately and mysteriously associated with him until the end of his life. He explained¹⁸ to the Bishop of Chester in 1771 that he owed everything in this world to William, who had shown him the closest

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and longest friendship, and had pursued it "with such nobleness in all respects as has no example in these times, and would have dignified the best periods of history." Recommending William to Philip Francis in India in 1777, Edmund described ¹⁹ him as "a friend I have tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with in an union not to be expressed, quite since our boyish years."

In after years this singular and inexpressible union involved the sharing by William of a common home and a common purse with Edmund and Edmund's wife. William had been admitted as a scholar to Westminster in 1743, and had afterwards gone up to Christ Church, Oxford; he was delighted with Edmund when he first set eyes on him. The two Burkes became intimate at once, and wrote poems ²⁰ to each other in which their common poverty was the most usual theme. Edmund, as a young man, was tall and well made. He had blue eyes which radiated good humour, and a very winning expression. For several years Edmund and William led a Bohemian and somewhat aimless existence to which Edmund was afterwards always exceedingly unwilling to refer. His reluctance may have sprung less from any false feeling of pride or shame than from an inborn stateliness of mind which rejected all sordid and uncongenial memories. When he was in London Edmund used to haunt some of the coffee-houses and debating clubs of Fleet Street and Covent Garden. He was intensely interested in the theatre, and thereby made Garrick's acquaintance. Much of his time, however, was passed in William's company, in the country. The two friends used to go on long tours together, and when they came to a place they liked they might stay for weeks. Their travels sometimes took them through parts of Northern France, and people whom they met



Edmund Burke as a boy

were often mystified ²¹ because it seemed so odd that two handsome young men of keen intelligence, but without rank or fortune, should appear to have no occupation at all, except reading and writing. Edmund read a prodigious amount during these years, but his health, which later became quite robust, occasionally troubled him. When he began to feel ill he would go to Bath, to enjoy the hospitality and professional care of his fellow-countryman, Christopher Nugent. In September, 1752, Edmund sent ²² Nugent a long poem, thanking him for all that he had done for him :

But what and when and how this youth shall pay
Must be discussed upon a longer day.

It was at Bath that Edmund fell in love with Nugent's daughter, Jane, who was four years younger than he. The faithful William at one time persuaded himself that he was in love with her too, but he accepted with remarkable good humour the fact that Jane very evidently preferred his friend. In the same commonplace book Edmund and William each, at this time, wrote a "Character" of Jane Nugent. Edmund's was a prose poem * ; William's was prosy and nothing more. The girl was a Roman Catholic,²³ and although, after her marriage, she conformed to the Church of England, Edmund's feeling towards her may possibly have increased his unwillingness to be called to the Bar. No examinations were held in the eighteenth century, and the only formality which was then required of the student when he was due to be called was that he should take an oath in denunciation of the Pope. Edmund's refusal to be called decided his father to take a step from which otherwise he might have shrunk. He stopped his son's allowance, and Edmund was compelled to seek a liveli-

* See Appendix 1.

hood where he could. He undertook occasional secretarial work for prominent politicians,²⁴ which helped to widen the circle of his acquaintance, and he sat down to the task of making a name with his pen. In the Spring of 1756, when he was aged twenty-seven, he published, anonymously, his first book, *The Vindication of Natural Society*. This work, which was hardly more than an essay, was intended to show that political truth was no more capable of being rationally explained than religious truth ; both rested, in the last resort, upon faith. In form and manner Burke's little book was a satire upon Bolingbroke's theory of "natural" religion ; the imitation of Bolingbroke's style was, however, almost too perfect, and many people thought that the book had really been written by Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke, whose posthumous *Philosophical Works* were published in 1754, had absorbed, during his long Jacobite exile, a full measure of that new speculative and destructive philosophy of France which Burke detested down to the last hour of his existence. It is significant that Burke's first published work should have been an attack upon Bolingbroke, for he saw clearly that the social order was in danger of being broken up by rationalist criticism unless its foundations could be shown to rest on something more secure and fundamental than reason alone.

The Vindication of Natural Society created a certain stir, but Burke, who was anxious to marry, was still without any means of earning a regular income. His difficulties were pressing, but he did not allow such trifles to interfere with the generosity and warmth of heart which he always displayed when confronted with the troubles of others. One day in 1756 he was walking in St. James's Park when he picked up an extraordinary acquaintance named Josef Emin. Emin was an Armenian who had come to England by way of India,

MARRIAGE

with a muddle of heroic ideas in his head about restoring his country and delivering his people. Emin had endured remarkable hardships, and Burke after listening attentively to his story, exclaimed ²⁵ :

“ Sir, my name is Edmund Burke, at your service. I am a runaway son from my father, as you are.”

He pulled out the few shillings which he had in his purse : “ Upon my honour this is all I have at present. Please accept it.” Emin, who possessed an odd guinea or two, refused the proffered gift, but Burke extracted his address, and called on him the following morning. He advised him about books, introduced him to William, and obtained some sort of employment for him. Emin subsequently became well known to many influential people, but he always gratefully acknowledged that Burke’s kindness marked the turning-point in his fortunes.

In Burke’s fortunes the year 1757 marked a turning-point. On March 12th, 1757,²⁶ he married Jane Nugent, and on April 21st, 1757,²⁷ his book on *The Sublime and the Beautiful* was published, which firmly established his reputation. Burke’s marriage was an ideally happy one, and he always said that every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof. Boswell once told ²⁸ Temple that he thought Burke might be one of the few people who enjoyed continual happiness in this life ; and he hastened to assure ²⁹ Burke, after he had been to stay with him for the first time in the country in 1782, that he considered him not only a very happy man, but “ a very, very good man.” Characteristically he asked Burke whether he thought it best for husbands and wives to share one bed, or to sleep in separate ones. Burke expressed himself strongly upon this point, declaring that separate beds were a sure sign of corruption. He gave sundry

THE YOUTH OF A PROPHET

reasons ³⁰ for holding this view which Boswell, though he noted them down eagerly in his Journal, omitted from the *Life of Johnson*. Jane Burke, by her sweetness, gentleness and modesty, won the love of all who knew her. She lived only for her husband, and with such a woman to wear "as a buckler" against the world, Burke set resolutely to work to build up a home and a position. His book on *The Sublime and the Beautiful* was an important work : it treated a subject which was very much in the forefront of men's minds during the eighteenth century. Burke had actually begun this work while he was still an undergraduate, but he took it out and revised it after the lapse of several years. *The Sublime and the Beautiful* represents Burke's only excursion into the world of abstract thought, for which, all his life, he expressed such rooted distrust. He chose, however, a psychological method of approach, and concentrated on facts to an extent which occasionally became ludicrous. In discussing the effect upon the lover of the presence of the beloved, Burke declared ³¹ :

"The body is effected, so far as I could observe, much in the following manner : the head reclines something on one side ; the eyelids are more closed than usual, and the eyes roll gently with an inclination to the object ; the mouth is a little opened, and the breath drawn slowly, with now and then a low sigh ; the whole body is composed, and the hands fall idly to the sides. All this is accompanied with an inward sense of melting and languor . . . but from this description it is almost impossible not to conclude that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system."

An illustration in the text could have added little to the singularity of this description, but *The Sublime and the*

Beautiful had a great success, particularly in Germany. It fixed Burke's place in men's minds for many years to come, and brought him a growing number of friends who were willing to help in pushing his fortunes. Burke's children were both born in 1758: Richard, adored by both his parents, in February; and another son, who died in infancy, in December. To meet these growing expenses, Edmund was still largely dependent upon his father-in-law, who had moved to London, and who assisted the young couple with money and frequent hospitality. To anyone as proud as Burke this position was not satisfactory, and he turned over in his mind a variety of means of achieving independence. He told ³² Richard Shackleton on August 10th, 1757, that he was hoping shortly to emigrate to America, but this plan came to nothing. Two years later, Burke was an unsuccessful candidate for the post of H.M. Consul at Madrid,³³ and he was said about the same time to have had designs on the Chair of Logic at the University of Glasgow. He neglected no opportunity, and at least as early as April, 1761, he was endeavouring to secure the post of Agent in London to the Colony of New York, to which he was not appointed until ten years later.³⁴ Burke's literary output, in the meantime, continued unchecked, and in April, 1757, appeared *An Account of the European Settlements in America*. This book, which treated the subject from a commercial standpoint, was written by William Burke, but it was subjected before publication to extensive revision by Edmund.³⁵ In 1758 Edmund published a History of England from the earliest times to the end of King John's reign, and in the same year he signed ³⁶ an agreement with Dodsley to edit the *Annual Register*.* The first issue of the *Annual Register* appeared in 1759, at a critical period

* See Appendix 2.

of the Seven Years War. It had an instantaneous success, and many of the early volumes ran into seven, eight and even nine editions. The *Annual Register* during the eighteenth century was widely read and respected, for Burke succeeded in making his annual survey of world affairs a focus of national opinion in days before such newspapers as *The Times* had risen to take its place. The influence of the daily Press was restricted, throughout the eighteenth century, by the limitations of the old hand-printing presses. To produce three thousand copies of a newspaper consisting of four sheets required twelve hours' printing at top speed, and during the third quarter of the century an average daily circulation of something under three thousand copies was regarded as satisfactory.³⁷ In these circumstances the influence of even the best newspapers was very much restricted, and it was far easier then than it would have been later for the *Annual Register* to become established as a national institution. In deference to the conventions of his age Burke never publicly acknowledged his connection with the *Annual Register*, but he devoted a considerable portion of his time to it, and he seems later deliberately to have made this work a part of his preparation for Parliament. He was able, by this means, to acquire that immense range of detailed information on every subject of current interest for which he was well known to be never at a loss. He always maintained, in his editorial capacity, a tone of judicial impartiality which contrasted very favourably indeed with the tone of his other writings and speeches.

Burke's rising reputation brought him a host of new friendships, including that of Dr. Johnson. Burke and Johnson were introduced by Garrick, and it was regarded ³⁸ as a portent when Johnson, on Christmas Day, 1758, at Garrick's table, submitted to being con-

tradicted by Burke, who was twenty years his junior, on the subject of Bengal. Mrs. Montagu, the "Queen of the Blue-Stockings," was devoted to Burke, and at her house he made many useful contacts. It was certain that the time could not be long delayed when he would succeed in obtaining that opening into public life upon which he had now set his heart, and the opportunity came when Lord Charlemont, an Irish peer, introduced him to William Gerard Hamilton, a Commissioner of the Board of Trade and Plantations. Early in 1759 Hamilton offered to take Burke as his private secretary, or as he delicately termed it, the companion of his studies. He said of Burke that he understood everything under the sun, except music and gaming. Burke was in no position to refuse Hamilton's offer, but when he accepted he seems to have regarded it more as a stepping-stone to higher things than Hamilton's pride was afterwards willing to allow. Hamilton was a young man of whom it was always being predicted that he would go far, although few things, in reality, were more improbable. He was a rich, fussy, handsome, indolent and cultivated bachelor ; he was also incapable of public speaking. He won a prodigious reputation by a maiden speech in the House of Commons, of which he had memorized every word ; as soon, however, as it was realized that he was unable to speak *ex tempore* he became known to all and sundry as "Single-speech." With this man Burke's fortunes were associated for the next six years.

CHAPTER TWO

Public Life

W. G. HAMILTON was an exacting chief, but he liked entertaining, and Burke met a large number of people at his house. He met, amongst others, Horace Walpole, who thought ¹ him a sensible young man, though a little too conscious of his "authorism." Burke was naturally proud of his literary success, for he knew that he owed his position to that alone ; he was determined that Hamilton should allow him sufficient time to enable him to continue to write. Burke's father was delighted by the news of his son's success, and in the summer of 1760 a reconciliation was arranged. Richard Burke sent his son a present of money,² and, a little more than a year later, he died.³ In the meantime Hamilton had been appointed Chief Secretary to the new Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Halifax, and Burke went on ahead to Dublin to prepare the ground for his chief. He found the situation there a little more hopeful than it had formerly been, owing mainly to the short-sightedness of England's commercial policy. The commercial interest of Ireland, like that of America, was wholly subordinated to that of England, and the younger generation of Irishmen dreamed of building up a national opposition which should be strong enough to make England see reason. Irish trade was mostly in Protestant hands, but no Protestant opposition could hope to succeed without Catholic support. In these circumstances it seemed as though the gulf which divided Protestant from Catholic,

Saxon from Celt, might gradually be bridged by the growth of a common Irish patriotism ; the spirit of a new age was in the air, and Burke flung himself with all the ardour of his nature into the task of encouraging it. He began what was intended to be a long work attacking the infamous system of the Penal Laws.⁴ Unfortunately, while his mind was filled with these ideas, a disastrous incident occurred. The Government had introduced a Bill into the Irish House of Commons for raising six regiments of Irish Catholics to serve abroad. Hamilton introduced this measure, but it provoked such an outcry from the Protestants that it was withdrawn. The Government made no serious attempt to curb this outbreak of Protestant intransigence and Catholic sentiment was bitterly offended. The dawn of a period of confidence and co-operation between both sections of the inhabitants of Ireland seemed further removed than ever, and Burke suffered a sad disillusionment. A widespread agrarian outbreak in the South was at that time in process of being suppressed. Burke complained ⁵ that this was made the occasion for unjustly imputing disloyalty to all the King's Catholic subjects. The Irish peasantry was miserably poor, ground down under the several exactions of an alien Government, an alien Church, and an alien Squirearchy which was engaged in enclosing the commons. Time was to show that unless some measure of reform could be introduced by agreement from above, revolution would enter violently from below.

Burke in Dublin was known as Hamilton's "genius." He made himself indispensable, and Hamilton, with a view to binding Burke more closely to his service, procured him a pension of three hundred pounds a year on the Irish Exchequer. Before this award was gazetted, in April, 1763, Burke sent ⁶ Hamilton a cautionary note.

He said that whilst he realized that his acceptance of the pension must permanently involve the sacrifice of some of his former independence, he wished to make it quite clear that he required time, during the summer months, in which to cultivate his literary reputation. When Halifax, in the Autumn of 1763, was succeeded in the Lord-Lieutenancy by Hugh Smithson, first Earl and later Duke of Northumberland of the new creation, Hamilton, for a time, retained the Chief Secretaryship. He failed, however, to keep on terms with Northumberland, and in the Spring of 1764 he was dismissed.

Burke returned, with his employer, to London, in time to become an original member of Johnson's Literary Club. The Club was started in the early months of 1764 on the proposition of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Besides Johnson, Reynolds and Burke, the other six original members were Burke's father-in-law, Christopher Nugent; Oliver Goldsmith; John Hawkins, a Middlesex magistrate with a taste for music, who proved "unclubbable"; Bennet Langton, a country gentleman; Topham Beauclerk, a man-about-town, and Andrew Chamier, who had been a stockbroker, but who had made enough to retire early, and "to become what, indeed, he seemed by nature intended for, a gentleman."⁷ Burke spent many happy hours in this company, and the Club membership became so much sought after that it was gradually increased to thirty-five. Members used at first to dine one night a week at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, Soho. About 1774 this custom was given up, and the Club met once a fortnight during the Parliamentary Session at a succession of coffee-houses in Sackville Street, Dover Street and St. James's Street. Among the members who were elected by ballot between the time of the Club's foundation and Burke's final retirement into the country, were David

THE CLUB

Garrick, Adam Smith, Charles James Fox, Edward Gibbon, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, James Boswell, Sir William Jones, William Windham, Richard Burke—Edmund's son—a number of Bishops, and Lords Charlemont, Ossory, Spencer, Lucan, Palmerston, Eliot, Macartney, and the Duke of Leeds.

On the whole Burke and Johnson possessed the two most characteristic minds of the eighteenth century. Their friendship was very close, and untinged by the least shadow of jealousy. Johnson said ⁸ once that he did not grudge Burke's being the first man in the House of Commons, because he was the first man everywhere. One night at the Club, when Johnson had been particularly aggressive, and had shouted Burke down from a desire to seize the conversation for himself, Bennet Langton told ⁹ Burke as they were walking home that he wished he had asserted himself a little more against Johnson. "Oh, no!" Burke said, "it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." Johnson's praise of Burke was frequent and liberal:

"Yes, sir, if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed to shun a shower, he would say—'This is an extraordinary man.' If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse drest, the ostler would say—'We have had an extraordinary man here.' " ¹⁰

Johnson loved Burke's knowledge, his genius and affluence of conversation: "His stream of mind," he once said, ¹¹ "is perpetual." On another occasion when he was ill, Johnson confessed ¹¹: "That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me." Goldsmith, who was a little jealous of Johnson, once asked ¹² Boswell if his hero was really like Burke, who "winds into a subject like a serpent."

Burke would have deprecated any such comparison. He had the most profound respect for Johnson, and he once invented what is probably the best extant imitation of the Johnsonian manner. A supposed imitation of Johnson's style was under discussion, and Burke remarked ¹³ : " No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson ; it has all his pomp without his force ; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." This was good, but Burke realized that it was not yet perfect, and after a momentary pause, he continued : " It has all the contortions of the Sybil, without the inspiration." It would be hard, as Boswell said, to improve upon the exquisite felicity of this.

In February, 1765, some stir was caused in London, and still more in Dublin, by the news that Burke and Hamilton had quarrelled ; the occasion was detailed in a note ¹⁴ which Burke left among his papers. Hamilton claimed that Burke, when he accepted his pension, had bound himself not to leave his service ; he asserted that he had given Burke a better start in public life than he could possibly have obtained elsewhere, and he accused Burke of being anxious now to break their connection on account of his patron's lack of success in retaining the Irish Chief Secretaryship. He offered to increase Burke's salary by a very considerable amount, and to submit the question of their disputed agreement to the arbitration of a third party. Burke was furious. He refused to allow anyone to be called in to sit in judgment on his character ; he repudiated the suggestion that he could not, six years before, have marketed his services to better advantage ; and he would not admit that there could be any question whether he was a slave or free. Since Hamilton was behaving unreasonably, Burke took the dignified, and indeed the only possible, course of resigning, into the hands of a nominee of Hamilton's,

the pension which Hamilton had procured for him. Hamilton and he agreed at the same time that, in order to avoid altercation, they should never meet or correspond again: "I shall never," Burke declared,¹⁵ ". . . look upon those who, after hearing my story do not think me *perfectly* in the right, and do not consider Hamilton as an infamous scoundrel, to be in the smallest degree my friends, or even to be persons for whom I am bound to have the slightest esteem as fair or just estimators of the characters and conduct of men."

He told ¹⁶ Henry Flood, the Irish patriot leader, that he had resigned his pension in order to rid himself of Hamilton completely, and not to carry "even a memorial of such a person about me."

When this storm had subsided Hamilton was faced with the problem of seeking a new "genius," and Burke with that of finding a new connection. Hamilton appears to have solved his problem by entering into an arrangement with Dr. Johnson, who was still at that time unpensioned. Johnson agreed ¹⁷ to supply Hamilton occasionally with his views on the main political topics which came before Parliament. Burke's problem was less easy of solution. The political stage in England was occupied by a few selfish groups of great nobles and their supporters, who were competing against each other for the sweets of office and for personal ends. These nobles were all nominally members of one great Party; they were Whigs whose ancestors had brought about the Revolution of 1688. They had enjoyed exclusive power ever since the failure of the Tory plot to restore the Jacobite line and shut out the Hanoverians at the death of Queen Anne in 1714. It is true that at the accession of George III, in 1760, Jacobitism expired and the Tories returned to Court, but government had lain for so long in Whig hands that a Whig monopoly had

virtually been established. The Tories, who were excluded from political power, had to rest content with exercising an absolute sway over the countryside in their dual capacity as squires and justices of the peace. In these circumstances the perennial cleavage between the Whig and Tory temperaments was no longer reflected to any appreciable extent in men's attitude to the particular problems which came before Parliament. Whigs and Tories sat together in the House of Commons, but the distinction between them was not very apparent, and politics had long been divorced from any foundation in political principle. The basis of every Party, or group, in Parliament was personal,¹⁸ and the "attractive" power of office was by far the most important factor in building them up. The cement which held a Party together consisted for the most part of places, pensions, contracts, honours, promotions and open and secret favours of all kinds, the whole sweetened by a small allowance of money from the Secret Service Fund. It was in this way that George Grenville built up his Party while he was in office from 1763 to 1765 ; it was in this way that the Duke of Bedford gathered round him his group of venal Peers, most of whom were members of his family or connections by marriage. The Bedford Whigs were notorious as political gangsters whose main public object was to enrich themselves out of public funds. It was, however, their boast that they could not be bought individually, but only in the gross. For the smooth working of this system of government was subject to a serious practical difficulty : it was found that any Party, on going into opposition, showed an immediate tendency to dissolve. A few of its members might remain faithful out of family loyalty, or private friendship, or out of a belief in the advantages of collective bargaining. A majority, however, always preferred

to make their individual arrangements, and to come to terms, if they could, with the group which had taken over the Seals and the Portfolios. The outstanding example of a wholly disinterested statesman at this period was the elder Pitt. Pitt alone possessed the confidence of his countrymen, and he knew, in a time of crisis, how to summon the spirit of the nation from its depths. Unfortunately, the unrepresentative character of the eighteenth-century House of Commons made it difficult, except in times of intense national emotion, for public opinion to make itself felt. Moreover, Pitt, as he grew older, developed faults of temper and of understanding ; he became so absurdly haughty that in the end it was impossible to work with him. It was in these circumstances that George III was enabled to put in hand his aim of restoring, by means of a Court Party centred about himself, the old royal prerogatives which had been falling into disuse. He pursued his policy by using the prestige of the Crown, and by resuming into his own hands most of the great volume of "patronage" which had been dispensed during the two previous reigns by Sir Robert Walpole, Henry Pelham and the Duke of Newcastle.

Amid all this welter it was important that Burke should find ground which might prove sufficiently solid to bear the weight of his political ideas. He discovered it, by a happy accident, in the character and pretensions of a small group of great landowners who were known as the Rockingham Whigs. It has to be confessed, in retrospect, that the Rockingham Party was an inadequate foundation for Burke's ideas, but at that time it was at any rate the best which he could have discovered. The Rockingham Whigs prided themselves on being the most disinterested custodians of the sacred principles of 1688 ; they despised the notorious corruption of the Bedfords.

Apart, however, from their rank and their wealth, none of the Rockingham Whigs would have been distinguished, and this was particularly true of their leader. The second Marquis of Rockingham, who was only thirty-five when he became Prime Minister, was a few months younger than Burke. He succeeded, at an early age, to the vast wealth and estates which had once belonged to the Earl of Strafford. As a boy Rockingham had won a reputation for spirit, which he failed later to sustain, by running away from Westminster School in order to join the Duke of Cumberland's army on its way to give battle to the young Pretender. As a young man he became a well-known figure on the turf. Rockingham's principal assets were his birth ; the confidence which his character inspired ¹⁹ ; and the warm friendship of H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland. His principal defects were indifferent health ; congenital indolence ; lack of knowledge, and ineffectiveness in debate. In many respects Rockingham was the ideal chief for Burke : the bond between them became very close, and each was indispensable to the other. The Whigs had been badly corrupted by their long unchallenged tenure of power, and Burke aimed at recalling them to a sense of their responsibilities. He felt that, since the days of Magna Carta at least, the nobles had held their power in trust, for the good of the nation, and he set himself the task of reminding them now of their trusteeship. By this means Burke hoped to restore to politics that foundation in faith and in principle which had been lost during the previous half-century. This is the respect in which Burke's contribution to English politics is comparable with that of Wesley to English religion. The result of the selfish attempts of the various component parts of the British Constitution to pursue isolated sectional interests, in place of the common good, was soon ap-

parent. The Crown, by attempting to direct affairs on an irresponsible plan of its own, plunged the country into a disastrous dispute with the American colonies ; the nobles, by fighting for their own hands and forgetting that their powers were held in trust, threatened to bring the whole social and political order into disrepute, and to open the way for possible revolution ; the House of Commons by its arbitrary proceedings in the case of John Wilkes, and in other cases, provoked a series of popular tumults which, for a time, looked exceedingly dangerous. Burke fought with all his might against these perils. He enunciated his doctrine of aristocratic trusteeship as men, in former ages, had preached the divine right of kings. Burke believed in aristocratic leadership because he felt that, in the circumstances of his time, no men other than those of the highest rank and the greatest wealth, were likely to prove sufficiently disinterested to guard the "just balance" of the Constitution ; and he held that upon the maintenance of that balance depended the safety and happiness of England.

When Grenville was dismissed in 1765, after passing the ill-fated Stamp Act, the most obvious candidate for the office of First Lord of the Treasury was William Pitt. On Pitt's refusal, however, the King was persuaded by his uncle, Cumberland, to send for Rockingham. Rockingham kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury on July 13th, 1765, and at once appointed Burke as his private secretary. Burke owed ²⁰ his introduction to Rockingham to his friend, William Burke, who at this time was better known than Edmund. William had made himself useful to Bute and Fox during 1762-3, and had then aspired to a Colonial Governorship ²¹; he had now attached himself to a wealthy and extravagant Irish Peer, Earl Verney, with whom he entered upon

a series of vast gambling transactions. When Rockingham's Government was formed, General Conway, Rockingham's Secretary of State for the Southern Department, appointed William Burke as his Under-Secretary. Edmund was hardly settled in his new employment before an attempt, which he attributed to Hamilton's malice, was made to ruin him. A number of stories reflecting unfavourably upon him were poured into the ears of the Duke of Newcastle, who was the most experienced member of Rockingham's Cabinet. Newcastle was a jumpy and laborious old man; he rushed off to see Rockingham at once, and warned ²² him against Burke, who was, he said, a disguised Catholic, and an undesirable person for the head of a Government to employ in a confidential capacity. Rockingham listened carefully, and behaved sensibly; he sent for Burke, and told him exactly what the Duke had said. Burke had little difficulty in rebutting the gossamer charges which Newcastle had repeated, and Rockingham said that he was fully satisfied. Burke nevertheless asked for leave to resign. He pointed out that what had happened might, unknown to Rockingham himself, result in vitiating that perfect confidence which ought to exist between a private secretary and his chief. Rockingham was much impressed by this display of manliness and candour. He would not hear of resignation, and told Burke that what had happened, far from impairing his confidence, had fortified it in such a manner as to leave no shadow of reserve at all.

Burke's new work soon involved him in the task of acting as manager of the Rockingham Party, and as Chief Whip. The first need of a Whip was clearly a seat in Parliament, and one was found, accordingly, in December, 1765, at Wendover. Wendover was a pocket borough controlled by William's friend, Lord Verney.



Edmund Burke and Lord Rockingham

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Verney had offered the seat at first to William, but William asked that it might be given to Edmund instead. Soon afterwards Verney found another seat for William. Edmund was elected on December 26th, 1765, and he took his seat at the opening of the new Session on January 14th, 1766. Three days later ²³ he made his maiden speech in favour of receiving a petition from the Colonial Congress at New York. Burke spoke again and again in denunciation of the Stamp Act, and acquired at once a prodigious reputation. He delighted ²⁴ the House by his manner of ridiculing the former Prime Minister, George Grenville, and Pitt, although his relations with the Rockingham Whigs were far from friendly, went out of his way to congratulate that Party on the wonderful acquisition which it had made. Among the writers of the many letters of congratulation which Burke received ²⁵ there seemed to be general agreement that he needed to be a little less personal in his manner of handling his opponents; Burke was, himself, well aware ²⁶ of this, but he never altered, and, indeed, as he grew older he grew constantly less restrained. However, for the present his friends were delighted by his success. Dr. Johnson told ²⁷ Bennet Langton, a fellow member of the Literary Club, that they had lost Burke's company since he became engaged in public business, but that he had gained at his first appearance in Parliament more reputation than perhaps any man had done before him: "He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder. Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to achieve civil greatness."

The main question confronting the first Rockingham Administration was the dispute with the American colonies. Grenville's Stamp Act had aroused wide-

spread opposition, and English merchants were suffering severely as a result of the retaliatory measures which the Americans had adopted. Lacking Pitt's support, the Government was largely dependent, at the outset of its career, upon the patronage of the Duke of Cumberland. Cumberland used to attend the meetings of the Cabinet, and he was a firm adherent of the Stamp Act. However, on October 31st, 1765, the Duke suddenly died, and Rockingham, after much hesitation, decided to pursue a policy of compromise. He resolved to repeal the Stamp Act, but to pass at the same time a Declaratory Act, in order to emphasize the dependence of the colonies on the decrees of the British Parliament. This was not going so far as Pitt would have liked, for he regarded the Stamp Act not merely as unjust, but as unconstitutional. On the other hand the King would have preferred modification to repeal. Very little of the credit for the repeal of the Stamp Act was given to Rockingham, for it was generally believed that his Government had been bullied into repeal by Pitt.

In May, 1766, Burke had the piquant task of dealing with John Wilkes, who paid a fleeting visit to London from Paris, where he was living under sentence of Outlawry. The process whereby an agreeable libertine was metamorphosed into a champion of English liberties was already far advanced, and Wilkes hoped that Rockingham would be willing to demand a pardon for him from the King. Wilkes had been convicted of Blasphemy, and Burke explained that it was impossible to invite the King to pardon him for this crime; he admitted,²⁸ however, that the true motive for all the prosecutions which had been launched against him was political. He said that, in these circumstances, Rockingham was prepared to do "almost anything" for Wilkes out of his private purse and to avow it to the

King, or to anyone. In return, it was essential that Wilkes should recross the Channel without delay. Wilkes had been arrested, together with a number of other people, under a General Warrant three years before. His offence was that he had criticized a speech from the Throne in Number Forty-Five of his paper, *The North Briton*, and for this he was thrown into the Tower. General Warrants were intensely unpopular and it was felt that they were un-English. They smacked of the arbitrary methods of Continental government, since their peculiarity was that they were general, and that they did not specify individuals by name. One of the most popular acts of Rockingham's first Administration was to declare them to be unconstitutional. By denouncing General Warrants Wilkes earned a great deal of applause, and by pleading his privilege as a member of Parliament he procured his release from the Tower. After improving his position by obtaining substantial damages from indignant juries for wrongful imprisonment, Wilkes was unable to resist the temptation to reprint his offending paper in book form. He did worse ; he owned a private printing-press, and out of pure *joie de vivre* he set up a few copies of a bawdy parody of Pope's *Essay on Man* which he had written some years before. He called it *The Essay on Woman*, and he appended to it a blasphemous skit on the prayer, "Veni Creator." This was to prove his undoing. Wilkes had appended a number of mocking footnotes to *The Essay on Woman* which he attributed to Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, who had annotated *The Essay on Man*. Warburton sat in the House of Lords, and the Peers accordingly voted this work to be a most scandalous, obscene and impious libel, and a breach of the privileges of their House. The House of Commons charged once more into the fray. It voted Number

Forty-Five of *The North Briton* to be a false and seditious libel, to which, whatever the Courts might say, no question of parliamentary privilege applied.

Wilkes fled to Paris, and a packed jury convicted him in his absence. When he failed to come up for sentence he was declared an outlaw. Public opinion, however, remained strongly in his favour, for it was felt that Parliament had been grossly subservient to the fanaticism of the Court Party in lending itself to the illegal persecution of an individual. Wilkes told ²⁹ Burke that he considered himself a martyr in the cause of liberty ; he said that he would be delighted to join the Rockingham Party if he could obtain a pardon. Burke replied ³⁰ that Wilkes' visit had been as imprudent as it had been delightful, and it was arranged ³¹ that a yearly subsidy of a thousand pounds should be collected from the leaders of the Party and sent to Wilkes abroad. Shortly afterwards the Rockingham Government collapsed. It had never, despite Burke's statement ³² to the contrary, enjoyed the confidence of the nation, and when it failed to obtain Pitt's support its days were numbered. On July 30th, 1766, the King dismissed Rockingham, and a new government was formed under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Grafton, but in effect under Pitt, who took the office of Lord Privy Seal, and was created Earl of Chatham. Grafton had formerly sat in Rockingham's Cabinet, but he deserted the Government shortly before its collapse. He wrote ³³ to Chatham to suggest that Burke would be an extremely useful man to secure ; he thought that he might accept an appointment as a Lord Commissioner of the Board of Trade. Chatham, in reply, said that there was no vacancy at the Board of Trade, and he criticized the soundness of Burke's economic views. Burke believed, nevertheless, that he could have had some employment in the new

Government if he had so wished, and Rockingham generously urged him to accept it. However, upon reflection Burke preferred, as he said, to re-enter ³⁴ the Party into which he had first been thrown by chance. The recent death of his elder brother, Garret, gave him a colourable excuse to cross over to Ireland in order to attend to family matters,* and to put himself out of reach of the complicated negotiations which were then being pursued in London.

Edmund was received in Ireland with acclamations wherever he went. The fame which he had won in Parliament had gone before him, and he received many honours. He had already received ³⁵ the Thanks of the Merchants of Lancaster for his services to British trade, and he now received the Freedom of Galway, and that of his native City of Dublin.³⁶ He went to Loughrea, in the South, where his mother and sister were living, and received ³⁷ a "Humble and Affectionate Address" from the Linen-Manufacturers of that place. His sister, who had married a Roman Catholic named Patrick French, was expecting a baby, and Edmund's mother, writing ³⁸ to a friend to announce the safe arrival of a "foxy" granddaughter, declared that it would be impossible to imagine a better son than Edmund, or a better daughter-in-law than Edmund's wife. One day, while he was at Loughrea, Edmund attended a fair, and saw a crowd of children gazing in wide-eyed wonder at the various shows. Edmund sought out the proprietor at once, and delightedly struck a bargain with him for the admission of the children to all the shows which they favoured. When his hosts hurried up and asked to be allowed to pay some part of the cost, Edmund exclaimed :

"No, no ! This pleasure must be all my own. I

* See Appendix 3.

may never again have the chance to make so many human beings happy at so small a cost."

One morning, unexpectedly, while he was shaving, Edmund received a visit from the master of the village school at Ballyduff, which he had attended as a child. He dashed downstairs at once, with his shirt unbuttoned, in order to welcome his visitor. He asked about everyone he could remember, and begged the old man to stay all day with him ; finally he pressed five guineas into his hand as he was going away. Before returning to England the Burkes went to Ballitore for a few days, to stay with the Shackletons. Edmund found that his friend, Richard Shackleton, who succeeded his father in the headmastership of Ballitore School, had grown somewhat narrow. Richard Shackleton was so strict a Quaker that for a time he refused to allow a protégé of Edmund's to paint his portrait. Edmund insisted ³⁹ that this should be done, and he also scolded Shackleton for an indiscretion. As Burke always veiled his private life in a cloak of mystery, people sometimes applied to Shackleton for information about his early years. A letter which Shackleton had written ⁴⁰ in response to such an enquiry was circulated, much to Burke's annoyance. It gave information concerning Burke's family and religious upbringing, and when, four years later, it found its way into the Press, Burke was still more annoyed.⁴¹ His friendship with Shackleton, however, survived all such minor disagreements, and the Burkes used eagerly to look forward to Shackleton's annual visit to London for the meeting of the Society of Friends.

Burke returned to London at the end of October, 1766, in time for the opening of the new Parliamentary Session. He realized that a long period of opposition lay before him, and he was determined to qualify as a leader of his party in the field. The new Chatham

THREEPENCE PER POUND WEIGHT ON TEA

Ministry, which he ridiculed ⁴² some years later as "a tessellated pavement without cement," was indeed a composite affair: it reflected Chatham's well-known preference for "measures, not men." Chatham himself only led the Government for one full session of Parliament; in March, 1767, his gout became so bad that he withdrew altogether from public life and remained for months on end immersed in a black cloud of brooding melancholy. As soon as the King realized that Chatham's illness was likely to be prolonged, negotiations were opened for broadening the basis of the Administration. Burke and Rockingham went carefully over the ground, but differences of principle on the subject of American taxation precluded the possibility of a union. Although the Rockingham Party decided to remain independent, the Bedford Whigs were open to an offer; they accepted Grafton's terms in November, 1767, and many of them joined the Administration. In that same month the Townshend Acts, imposing duties on the importation of glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea into the Colonies, became law. It would have been impossible for such legislation to have been introduced if Chatham had remained at the helm, and Burke fought it with all his strength, in vain. The opposition in America was implacable, but Burke's reiterated warnings of impending disaster passed unheeded. Unheeded too was his passionate opposition to the Government's policy of interference in the affairs of the East India Company. The Government was in need of money, and it was felt that the time had come to make the Company contribute something in return for the privileges which it enjoyed. Between September, 1766, and May, 1767, the Proprietors of East India Stock compelled their Directors to increase the rate of dividend paid by the Company from 6 per cent. to 12½ per cent.

This increase imposed a severe strain upon the resources of the Company, but it was notorious that the Company's servants were amassing fabulous fortunes for themselves out of the plunder of Bengal. Clive's victories during the Seven Years War had involved the Company in vast new territorial responsibilities for which it was proving itself unfitted : Chatham himself had considered that it was time to assert the supremacy of the Crown in Indian affairs. In these circumstances an Act was passed restraining the Company from increasing its annual rate of dividend by more than one per cent. in any single year ; at the same time the Company was required to pay an annual sum of £400,000 to the Treasury in return for the privileges which it enjoyed. Burke and the Rockingham Whigs bitterly opposed every stage of these proceedings. Burke argued that they constituted an arbitrary invasion of the sacred rights of property, and a violation of the East India Company's charter. He accused the Government of a desire to share in the plunder of the East, and to exploit a new and enormous source of influence. He used the most extravagant language in denouncing the Government's intentions, and his efforts were seconded by those of his kinsman, William Burke. Unfortunately, it was known ⁴³ to many members of the House that both the Burkes had been speculating on a large scale in East India Stock, and that they stood to gain greatly from any increase in the rate of dividend which the Company might declare.

One other matter engaged Burke's close attention before Parliament was dissolved. A dispute had arisen between two of the greatest territorial magnates in the kingdom—the Duke of Portland and Sir James Lowther. Portland was a Rockingham Whig, and a man of high character ; Lowther was a sadistic brute, whose sanity

was not above suspicion. Sir James Lowther, who later became Earl of Lonsdale, belonged to the Court Party, and controlled nine seats in the Commons ; in 1767 he was engaged in fighting Portland for the electoral interest of the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, where they both owned vast estates. Portland's ancestor, Count Bentinck, for his services in helping to bring over William of Orange at the time of the Revolution, had been rewarded by the grant of an enormous area of Crown land in the North of England. There had been a considerable outcry at the time, and it was doubtful how far the Crown was entitled to dispose in perpetuity of all the land which had been granted to Portland's ancestor. Since the Civil War and the troubled times of the Commonwealth, a practice had grown up whereby private jobbers were permitted to approach the Treasury with an offer to prove the title of the Crown to certain lands which had been usurped, under the pretence of being granted away. The reward of such informers was usually a lease, at a nominal rent, of those lands in respect of which they had been successful in proving a flaw in the owner's title. Sir James Lowther now claimed to have discovered a flaw in Portland's title to some valuable estates in the north-west of England ; he made the usual application to the Treasury and demanded the usual reward of the informer. The consternation was profound. Although his family had held the estates for the best part of a century, Portland was unable to prove his title, and the disputed lands were accordingly resumed by the Crown and leased to Lowther at a nominal rent. With the estates went a large number of voters, and by dint of threats and bribery—methods sanctioned by the custom of the time—Lowther was enabled to win his electoral contest against Portland's interest in both counties.

It was generally felt that Government had gone too far in its desire to gratify a powerful supporter, and to injure an opponent. Land was the foundation of the Whig power in the State, and the action of the Treasury in Portland's case seemed to strike a blow at the basis of all prescriptive right. On that matter, therefore, the Government found itself deserted by many of its supporters, including the entire body of the Bedford Whigs. Sir George Savile, one of the leaders of the Rockingham Party, introduced a "Nullum Tempus" Bill into the House of Commons in February, 1768, which aimed at making sixty years possession a bar to any claim on the part of the Crown. The sacredness of prescriptive right was a cardinal article of Burke's creed; it was on this high ground that his opposition to the Government's policy of interference in the affairs of the East India Company was based. Burke seriously felt that once the sacred veil of what he called "Prescription" had been pierced, there would be nothing to prevent a fierce gale of French metaphysics from entering and blowing down the whole fabric of eighteenth-century society like a house of cards. He flung himself heart and soul into the task of vindicating Portland's right, and winning influential support for it. He scoured endless documents; he made masses of notes⁴⁴; he bound Portland to himself for life by the part which he took in the affair. It was characteristic of Burke that he should have made a sordid squabble of this nature the occasion for a solemn revindication of the basic principles upon which the social order rested. When the first Parliament of George III was dissolved in March, 1768, Savile's motion, which was opposed by the Government, stood adjourned.

CHAPTER THREE

Private Life

IN many eighteenth-century Memoirs the Burkes are referred to collectively in rather a mysterious way. They were a trio of Irish adventurers, and they consisted of Edmund Burke ; Edmund's friend, William Burke ; and Edmund's younger brother, Richard Burke. William and Richard remained unmarried, and there is no evidence that any woman meant anything to either of them ; their domestic lives centred entirely round Edmund and Jane, and so far as circumstances permitted they all shared a common home and a common purse. William and Richard did not enjoy good reputations, but this fact never gave Edmund a moment's concern ; he adored them both with his whole heart, and thought them perfect ; no family could have been more closely knit than theirs. Young Richard Burke crossed from Dublin to London in 1757, and was established in the City ; two years later he sailed for the West Indies "with a very valuable cargo."¹ In May, 1763, by William's influence, he was appointed ² a Collector of Customs in Grenada, and a year later he was promoted ³ to be Receiver-General of His Majesty's Revenue. Edmund told ⁴ Richard Shackleton that his brother's employment was very lucrative, and that Dick hoped by means of a "laborious and hazardous youth" to purchase "a peaceful, honourable and affluent decline of life." He was to be disappointed.

William Burke in the meantime had risen high in

the political world ; he became Under-Secretary of State to General Conway in the Rockingham Government of 1765, and he made effective use of his position. In the Spring of 1766 an intimate friend of all the Burkes, named Lauchlan Maclean, was sent out as Lieutenant-Governor of the island of St. Vincent, in the West Indies. William complained ⁵ that the profit was small, but said he hoped that it would soon be possible to "gild" Maclean's plume by appointing him a Commissioner for the Sale of Lands. The prospects were evidently encouraging ; and the Burkes felt themselves sufficiently secure to launch out as patrons of the arts. Edmund and William joined Maclean in befriending James Barry, a spirited Irish boy who became later a famous artist. They sent him to Italy, to study art in Rome and Florence, and paid all his expenses. William reassured ⁶ Barry, after the Rockingham Government had fallen, by saying that it made no difference to them whether "Ned" was employed or not. He begged Barry to be less attentive in future to little matters of expense : "You see it has pleased God to increase our store, and that by the friendship of another ; the least retribution we can make is to be happy if we can be useful to another friend of worth and merit."

In December, 1766, William warned ⁷ Barry of his impending resignation from the Government. His chief, General Conway, had remained in office under Chatham, but William, after a few months' hesitation, resolved to join Edmund in opposition. He told Barry that he was not to worry when he heard the news, because their affairs were now so well arranged that they had not a temptation to swerve an inch from the straightest path of perfect honour. Edmund, too, wrote to Barry, but he avoided the subject of money. He wrote to him about painting, and begged ⁸ him to con-

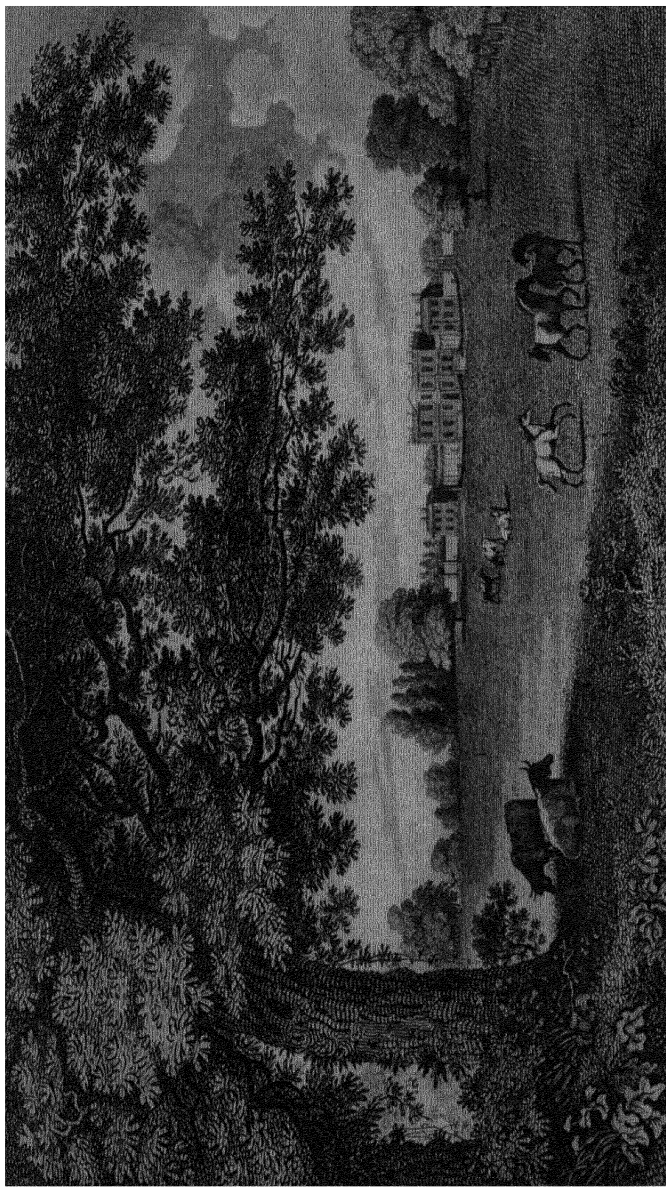
A SPLENDID PRIZE

quer his unfortunate delicacy, and to go through a full course of anatomy, with the knife in his hand. Edmund had hoped to visit Italy in the Summer of 1767, when he would have been able to see his protégé ; he was, however, prevented by the abortive negotiations for a Whig coalition to include his own Party which involved him in a series of visits to the country homes of the various Party leaders. He made up his mind to visit Italy in the following year, 1768, but at the last moment he was diverted another way. He suddenly made what he called ⁹ “ a push ” to cast a little root in the country. Ten years before he had been practically penniless ; he now purchased, for exactly twenty thousand pounds,¹⁰ an estate of about six hundred acres at Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire. This property, which was known as Gregories, or Butler’s Court, included arable and pasture land, some fine timber and a detached farm. The house itself was built in the Palladian style, and resembled Buckingham Palace, although on a smaller scale. Boswell, when he first saw ¹¹ it, was overcome with wonder at the appearance of a suite of rooms hung with valuable pictures in rich, gilded frames. There were, amongst others, seven landscapes by Poussin which Sir Joshua Reynolds valued at seven hundred pounds, a fine Titian, and a considerable collection of sculpture. Altogether Burke had drawn a splendid prize, but it was to cost him nearly thirty years of financial embarrassment and mental anguish. In a short confession which he drafted ¹² after his son’s death, he wrote : “ Calling myself to a strict account with regard to the happiness of my son, I cannot acquit myself of putting many more things to the risque of certain contingencies and events, than I was justly entitled to do.”

The Burkes were a single financial and domestic unit, and Edmund’s purchase of the Beaconsfield estate repre-

sented an attempt to capitalize the success which had hitherto attended the various speculations in which he was involved. It was notorious that at this period William Burke, in association with Lord Verney, was gambling on a vast scale in East India Stock. Edmund denied,¹³ in 1772, that he himself had ever been interested in this Stock, but there is evidence¹⁴ that four years before he was a holder. He may have been tempted to equivocate by his unwillingness to weaken more than he could help the force of his opposition to the Government's Indian policy. He thought that the Government had deliberately encouraged a principle of instability in the market value of East India Stock, and although he did not like to suggest that Ministers had themselves profited as a result of this, he observed¹⁵ : "I never thought it an excuse for turpitude of conduct that a man became a pander to others because he did not care for venery himself."

The purchase of Gregories would have strained the resources of the Burkes, even if fortune had continued to smile. Fortune, however, withdrew her favours entirely within a year of the completion of the deal. Hyder Ali, the Ruler of Mysore, was at war with the East India Company, and despite the defeat of his allies, he continued to make extraordinary headway against the British. In the early months of 1769, he swept with his cavalry almost up to the gates of Madras, and it became necessary to conclude peace with him upon his own terms. The news in London was received with consternation, and there was a sensational collapse in the value of East India Stock. George Grenville was told¹⁶ by his Secretary on June 1st, 1769, that Lauchlan Maclean was absolutely ruined, and that the Burkes and Lord Verney would be among the chief sufferers. The great Stockbroking House of Delafontaine collapsed



Gregories, Beaconsfield, from the park

under the strain, and on the opening of the firm's books, Mr. Delafontaine gave up¹⁷ the names of the Burkes and Maclean as his employers in buying East India Stock on margin. Their "differences," which they were unable to meet, were enormous,¹⁸ and it became necessary for Edmund to mortgage Gregories up to the hilt,¹⁹ and to borrow money from his friends where he could. He applied²⁰ to Garrick, on June 15th, 1769, for a loan of one thousand pounds, and he told²¹ Rockingham, who also assisted him, that he could hardly bear to turn his thoughts to Indian politics, owing to the misfortunes which his friends had suffered through the late "revolution" in the India House. Nevertheless the Burkes wasted no time in useless repining; they set resolutely to work to rally their broken fortunes. Richard Burke had been malingering in England for three years, on the excuse of a badly broken leg which was alleged to be the result of a fall in the street. During that time he was active in the City, and had earned the nickname of "Duck" Burke, instead of Dick.²² When a man failed to meet his differences he was said to have "waddled" like a duck, and Dick now waddled off to Grenada. An attempt which made Edmund extremely indignant was first made²³ by Richard's official superiors to induce him to resign, but when it failed he was peremptorily ordered to return immediately to his post. He had not been back very long before he had recourse to a desperate expedient for remedying his financial situation. During the months of October and November, 1770,²⁴ he purchased an enormous extent of land from the Red Caribbees on the island of St. Vincent. He paid almost nothing for it, because nobody thought that the Red Caribbees, who were an ignorant, dwindling and insignificant race, had any title to the lands which Richard claimed to have

bought from them. Even if they had possessed a good title it was felt that the Red Caribbees would have had no power to alienate their territories for a mere song. There were two classes of native inhabitants on the island—the Red and the Black Caribbees. The Blacks, who were descended from a cargo of negro slaves which had been wrecked off St. Vincent a hundred years before, had grown to be by far the more numerous and important. Richard, nevertheless, maintained that the handful of Red Caribbees who survived were the “natural” proprietors of the whole island by virtue of their descent from the indigenous inhabitants. On this flimsy pretext he founded his case, and he was stoutly supported by his brother, Edmund. Burke devoted an entire chapter ²⁵ of the *Annual Register* for 1773 to the attempt to prove Richard’s claim, and to establish the “natural” right of the Red Caribbees to do what they liked with their own. The Burkes’ action in this matter was particularly resented in the West Indies because the land question in St. Vincent was a very delicate one. An attempt had been made to oust the natives from the lands which they occupied, in order to make room for European settlers. It was urged that the natives were in possession of the best land, and that they were incapable of making efficient use of it. The attempt to oust the Caribbee owners, however, had threatened to provoke a rebellion, and a truce was arranged while the question of Caribbee rights and European claims was submitted to the King in Council for adjudication. Richard’s intervention at such a time was a preposterous scandal : he used his official position in the neighbouring island of Grenada in an attempt to browbeat the Council of St. Vincent into admitting his claim. This action evoked the contemptuous hostility which it deserved, and the Council of St. Vincent

SPECULATION IN LAND

passed an Act which was made retrospective, to invalidate ²⁶ all agreements entered into with the dwindling body of the Red Caribbees. Between 1770 and 1776 Richard Burke, actively supported by Edmund on the home front, was continuously at odds with the authorities over his disputed land purchase in St. Vincent. In various ways he made himself a public nuisance, and the Governor of Grenada, General Leybourne, complained of his conduct on several occasions to the Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Hillsborough. At one time all public business in the Assembly of Grenada was suspended ²⁷ as a result of the uproar which Richard Burke had occasioned. In September, 1773, Edmund Burke confessed ²⁸ frankly to Rockingham that unless his brother's claim was substantiated, he saw no way out of "certain other business," which was not less distressing than Richard's. This other business was no doubt the final, irretrievable ruin of William Burke, which took place in March, 1773, as a result of another revolution in the India House. Backed by the irrepressible Lord Verney, William had engaged in a last desperate gamble in East India Stock. Verney was so hopelessly unbusiness-like that it is impossible to unravel the details of his financial relations with the Burkes. Edmund and William are alleged ²⁹ to have owed him twenty-five thousand pounds between them in 1769. The outlook then, though black, was not hopeless, and young Barry was still maintained in Italy with a warning ³⁰ that he would need to be more careful in drawing bills for the future, so as to leave his friends time in which to look out for the money with which to meet them. The story of the final crash in 1773 is inimitably told ³¹ in the racy pages of William Hickey's *Memoirs*. On January 17th, 1773, Hickey, together with his father, Joseph Hickey, a Mr. Cane and William

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Burke, stopped at the White Hart Inn at Marlborough on their way from Bath to London :

“Come now, Will,” said Joseph Hickey to William, after supper, “as all here present are sincerely devoted to you, tell us what is your true state with respect to India stock.”

“I will tell you, Joe, honestly and fairly. Here is a letter which I received from my broker this day, an hour before we left Bath, clearly demonstrating that was I to retire now, I could realize eighty thousand pounds.”

“Then for God’s sake, my dear Will, do so. Cut forthwith, without losing a day.”

At this point the ex-Under-Secretary wagged his head :

“No, no, my friends, not yet. Our party act upon a certainty, and are not to be shaken. When we started I was let into the secret, and I know it could not be otherwise. The sum I fixed upon was a plum (one hundred thousand pounds). I shall soon accomplish my object, and will then bid them good morning.”

Expostulation was useless. Two months later the Clive party in the India House prevailed against the party of Laurence Sullivan, which William had backed with his last shilling. William was absolutely ruined, and his friend Verney lost more than one hundred thousand pounds.

After this disaster it seemed that the only chance of saving William was to put through Richard’s West Indian business without delay. Edmund, accordingly, approached * no less a person than the Prime Minister, Lord North, and he used as his intermediary, Charles Fox, who was at that time a Junior—not to say juvenile—Lord of the Treasury. Fox was twenty years younger

* See Appendix 4.

than Burke and the friendship between them, which had been begun while Fox was still an undergraduate,³² was one of the wonders of the age. It was already warm and close, although Fox was a youthful member of the Government, while Burke was a middle-aged leader of the Opposition. Fox was one of the greatest gamblers who ever lived, and his finances were at this time almost as desperate as those of the Burkes. Burke now offered ³³ Fox a share in the profits of Richard's speculation if he could influence North, who was the head of the Treasury, to admit Richard's purchase to be a good one. Horace Walpole ascertained that Richard's lands were worth the enormous sum of one hundred thousand pounds, and North, under pressure from Fox, suggested a circuitous way out of the difficulty. He proposed that the Treasury should reject Richard's claim, and that the lands should be granted to General Monckton who had been in command of the land forces which had subdued St. Vincent during the Seven Years War. This would have had the effect of saving the face of the Treasury, and as Monckton was a friend of the Burkes, North urged that there might be an unwritten, gentleman's agreement, whereby Monckton should immediately sell the lands to Richard Burke for approximately one-tenth of their market value. In this way Monckton would have received about ten thousand pounds as a reward for his services in the war, while the Burkes would have gained nearly everything which they claimed, and would have netted approximately ninety thousand pounds. Parliament had already voted that Monckton should be suitably rewarded for his services, and Burke, when Fox reported North's proposal to him, was extremely satisfied. It seemed as though, with the aid of a little tact, the whole business would soon be put successfully through the Treasury.

Unfortunately North now acted in a "boyish" and unguarded manner. He dropped a casual line to Monckton in which he mentioned that he thought of rewarding him by a grant of Richard's lands, and then found, as Edmund complained, that he had made an offer which he could not easily recall, upon terms which he was powerless to enforce. The Prime Minister had, in fact, put himself into Monckton's hands, for the General, as soon as he heard that there was a possibility of Richard's lands being granted to him, absolutely declined to consider parting with them for anything less than their full market value. This was an unpleasant check, but the most serious obstacle which stood in the way of substantiating Richard's claim arose less from Monckton's intransigence than from the attitude of Sir William Young, the new Governor of St. Vincent. Young had been sent out to St. Vincent to arrange a redistribution of the Caribbee lands; the natives were to be evicted from the holdings which they possessed, and to be compensated by a grant of land in certain other, less fertile parts of the island. Among the lands which were scheduled as part of the territory to be allotted to the natives by way of compensation was the whole area which Richard claimed to have bought. In these circumstances Edmund informed³⁴ his cousin, Garret Nagle, in Ireland, that Dick was engaged in an affair of magnitude, which required time and patience. In the end no amount of patience availed, and Charles Fox was dismissed from the Treasury. Moved partly by pique at the failure of all his efforts, he had attacked North openly in the House of Commons in February, 1774. Fox's gambling debts had recently been funded at a total of one hundred and forty thousand pounds, and it was believed in some quarters that he had been guilty of an attempt to rob the Treasury. By July, 1775,

CHARACTER OF RICHARD BURKE

Richard Burke also had exhausted the patience of his official superiors ; he was suspended ³⁵ from his office of Receiver-General in Grenada, and after his return to England early in 1776 the islands saw him no more. Horace Walpole noted ³⁶ spitefully in his *Journal* that Edmund Burke's judgment, alike in his purchase and in his stock-jobbing, had proved as erroneous as in his oratory and in his politics.

Although Richard Burke's claims on the West Indies collapsed so disastrously, it was found that the West Indies had certain claims outstanding upon Richard Burke. He was accused ³⁷ of misappropriating £9,587 of Government money to his own use, and for some years he was put to all kinds of humiliating shifts in order to evade the charge. In the Autumn of 1780 judgment was obtained against him for this sum in the Exchequer, but Richard contested the judgment and contrived somehow to escape the necessity for paying. In November, 1783, when the short-lived Fox-North Coalition was in office, and the Burkes' star was temporarily in the ascendant, Richard Burke was formally relieved by the Treasury of all "surcharges." It is significant that at this time Richard had, by Edmund's influence, been made Joint-Secretary to the Treasury, although it would have been hard to imagine a more unsuitable appointment.

In May, 1784, after the Coalition had fallen, Richard Burke was ordered to pay £2,000 immediately on pain of instant prosecution. Edmund's influence, however, seems to have been just sufficiently strong to secure the indefinite postponement of any final action against his brother. The character of Richard Burke is well illustrated in a "Narrative" drawn up by Sir Thomas Kent and preserved ³⁸ by Warren Hastings, Edmund's great enemy, among his private papers. On

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September 4, 1776, at Brighton, Sir Thomas Kent, Sir Alexander Keith, and two other gentlemen sat down with Richard Burke to play at dice. In the course of the evening Richard Burke lost £14,970. Richard confessed the next morning that he possessed only £2,000 in the world, and he said that he was unable to advance a single guinea on the ground that he was shortly going out to Grenada, where he would need every penny which he possessed! For years Richard protested on various occasions "with his hand upon his heart and calling God to witness" that he was resolved to pay in full as soon as he could raise the money. In the end, of course, he never paid a farthing. Richard did not go out again to the West Indies after his return to England in 1776: instead he read for the Bar together with his nephew, Richard Burke the younger—Edmund's son. Sir Joshua Reynolds, with characteristic generosity, paid his first year's fees, and said that he would have liked to bet half his fortune on Dick's success. Fox, too, prophesied that he would do well. However, neither of the two Richards did any good at the Bar, although at the end of his life Richard the elder was appointed, by Edmund's influence, Recorder of Bristol. In a "Character" of his brother which is preserved³⁹ among Burke's papers, Edmund commented on Richard's amazing "integrity that no temptation could corrupt. . . . When he acted as a criminal Judge he entered the Court with awe and terror, as if he were going into the Holy of Holies. . . ."

William Burke's later history was if anything even more discreditable than that of Richard. Threatened with arrest for debt, he fled to India, without any promise of employment, in June, 1777. By Edmund's influence he was eventually appointed Paymaster of the King's Troops in India, and in that position he strained every

CHARACTER OF WILLIAM BURKE

nerve in a vain attempt to make a fortune out of the balances which passed through his hands. He wrote ⁴⁰ to Richard the younger, Edmund's son, in December, 1785, and expatiated on his chance of being able to remit the balance of the public debt, which amounted to six hundred thousand pounds, to England. He said that if he was successful his own profit could not be less than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds—a mere 25 per cent.—“to be used, of course, for our common benefit.” Young Richard Burke was the apple of William's eye, and William told the boy how anxious he was to clear himself, and also “to clear Beaconsfield.” During the whole period of his residence in India his salary and allowances were passed through the younger Richard's hands: “Depend on it, your father and his son shall never find a doubtful act thrown on them—but the money made in remittance, Insurance being paid, is as fair as the product of a man's own Acres.” William promised that he would put nothing to risk, but “If it should happen so that your poor Uncle himself should be put at perfect Ease, as well as that your Life shall be raised above the difficulties that have attended ours—why, surely I am not allowed to quit the Ground that is sowed with such hopes. The Crop is in the hand of God.”

Edmund Burke strained every nerve in England to advance William's schemes, quite blinded by affection to the fact that his friend's plans were flagrantly dishonest. William had two main schemes for enriching himself: the first was through a complicated juggle with the Indian provincial exchanges; the second was through conjuring up a vast paper debt in India, in order that he might make a profit of 25 per cent. by remitting it to England. If William had been successful not only he but all the Burkes would have been enriched. Edmund Burke, who was perfectly well aware of this,

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was actively engaged in pushing William's interests for months after the Impeachment of Hastings, in which he played the role of principal prosecutor and accuser, had been begun. Peculation and jobbery were two of the main charges against Hastings, and in December, 1789, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, writing from Calcutta, characterized ⁴¹ William Burke's plan for juggling with the exchanges as "scandalous," and that for remitting the public debt as so "extraordinary" that he could hardly bring himself to believe that it was seriously made. He considered that the sending of William out to India was a most unnecessary job, and he said rightly that he would deserve to be impeached if he countenanced William's proposals. William Burke returned to England broken in health, fortune and reputation in the early months of 1793. He left behind him in India a heavy deficit in the Crown funds with which he had been entrusted. On the one hand he was in danger of being prosecuted for embezzlement, and on the other he was threatened with imprisonment for debt at the instance of the heirs of Lord Verney.⁴² "I know," Edmund wrote,⁴³ "Mr. Burke must owe money to the Crown . . . where is the fund to answer the Crown Balances which *must* appear, or any part of them, if everything he has in the world shall go to Lady Fermanagh?" In the circumstances Edmund described the attempt of Lady Fermanagh, who was Verney's daughter, to collect a purely private debt as "a deed palpably fraudulent (though not so intended by her Ladyship)." In the end, after a series of apoplectic strokes, William passed beyond the reach of all his creditors.

Such in outline was the financial background against which Edmund's life was passed: "My affairs," he confessed ⁴⁴ in an agony of remorse, after his son's

death, "were always in a state of embarrassment and confusion ; but he and his mother contrived that this should be rarely visible to the world. Everything about us bore the appearance of order. It is incredible with what skill, patience, and clearness he provided for them, by discreet delay, or by method and foresight and every species of skilful management, in concert with his admirable mother. What is equally wonderful is that they both kept from me, personally, everything that was fretful, teasing and disquieting, so that in truth, I had but a kind of loose general knowledge of several things which, if they had, during so many years of other contention and close application to Business come to my knowledge in detail, I am perfectly sure I could never have borne up against them, much less have preserved that cheerfulness and animation, which it was visible I enjoyed, whilst everything was untoward enough, within and without."

An odour of financial adventureship surrounded Burke's most intimate domestic ties ; he regarded all the actions of Will and Dick in such a fond and sanguine light that he was incapable of appreciating the true significance of his own position. If his friends' schemes had succeeded he would himself have been enriched, and in this respect it is impossible to palliate his conduct by relating it to the morality of his age. It is true that Edmund's intentions were always scrupulously honourable and even noble ; that he was generous to a fault, and that his Bill for Economical Reform, even in the emasculated form in which it eventually reached the Statute Book, dealt a mortal blow at the eighteenth-century system of government by means of jobbery and corruption. But between Burke's intentions and his actions a gulf is fixed which no amount of sophistry can ever hope to bridge. He was betrayed by a flaw in his

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nature which was tragic by reason of its simplicity, and lack of all mean or petty motive. Burke allowed his judgment to be overwhelmed by the intensity of his family affections ; he was temperamentally incapable of seeing what would have been as clear as daylight to almost any lesser and more ordinary intelligence than his. He complained bitterly of the campaign of obloquy which pursued him all his life, but it was he, unwittingly, who provided his enemies with the best of their material. Not all the details of Edmund's relations with William and Richard Burke were known to his contemporaries, but enough was known to provide considerable grounds for suspicion. Burke's sudden purchase of his Beaconsfield estate provoked comment which was not unmixed with admiration. There were, however, two other matters in regard to which comment was distinctly unfavourable. It was known that Burke was jobbing in East India Stock at a time when he was passionately opposing the Government's Indian policy ; it was known further that he was the paid Agent in London of the Colony of New York at a time when he was passionately opposing the Government's policy towards America. If these had been isolated instances of imprudence, it would be possible, perhaps, to pass them over in silence, but unfortunately they were symptomatic of a serious lack of responsibility which characterized Burke's conduct of his public as well as of his private life. It is astonishing that he can have allowed himself to approach Lord North in the matter of Richard's dubious land speculation at a time when he was threatening that Minister with impeachment on account of his American policy ; it is astonishing that he should have attempted to further William's dishonest schemes in India at a time when he was engaged in conducting the Impeachment of Warren Hastings for offences which, in

CHARACTER OF EDMUND BURKE

substance at any rate, were certainly less gross than either of the two plans which William had formed for robbing the public funds. Burke showed himself at least equally irresponsible in several other matters, some of which were publicly known during his lifetime, while others have never yet been discussed. When he was in office during 1783 as Paymaster-General, Burke restored to their places, out of pure humanity and in face of a loud public outcry, two suspended officials who were known to have embezzled large sums of public money, and against whom prosecutions were impending. He tried further, as will be seen, in that same year to procure for his son the second most valuable sinecure on the Exchequer, which was worth thousands of pounds a year to its possessor, at a time when he was labouring to force through Parliament a series of Bills for suppressing as many as possible of such abuses, and for putting down jobbery and corruption. The perfervid zeal which Burke showed for the cause of Catholic emancipation at a time when, towards the end of his life, he was inveighing loudly against the Dissenters, led many to suspect him, unjustly, of religious hypocrisy. The wild extravagance of his language, and of his conduct on many occasions when his passions were aroused, gave rise to reports that he was mentally unstable. It was characteristic of Burke that he should have laid himself open to the grossest charges by his imprudent zeal in taking up cases of homosexual offenders ; during the Spring of 1780, in a time of national emergency, he did not hesitate to inflict upon the House of Commons an impassioned harangue on the subject of sodomy. Such instances could be multiplied, and the more Edmund was held up by his own party to the admiration of mankind as a kind of superior being, the more loud grew the whispers that this vaunted idol possessed feet of common clay

PRIVATE LIFE

It was widely but unjustly supposed that Burke was a hypocritical prig, when the truth was that he was a seer, who was constitutionally unfitted for the responsibilities of office, or for the conduct of mundane affairs. It was universally agreed that Burke was one of the greatest figures in the public life of his age, and yet, when the opportunity presented itself, even his own party refrained from according him Cabinet rank. Burke's failure to secure high office has been attributed to invincible aristocratic prejudice, but in fact such prejudice had very little to do with the matter. Burke described the politician as the philosopher in action, but his closest friends and most fervent admirers understood best how totally unfitted their prophet-philosopher was to support the responsibilities of office. Burke himself in the end did not dispute this view, and during his later years at any rate he never aspired to enter the Cabinet.

It was inevitable in these circumstances that Burke's private life should have been in certain respects unhappy. He possessed, however, so potent a gift for inspiring enthusiasm that he was always to some extent insulated against the buffets of the outer world. One night at the Literary Club Sir John Hawkins attacked Burke in so insolent a manner on the subject of his stock-jobbing that the harmony of that Club of Clubs was momentarily threatened. Burke's fellow members, at their next meeting, were not backward in testifying their displeasure with the result that Hawkins never cared to attend the meetings of the Club again.⁴⁵ On another occasion, in 1771, one of Burke's oldest friends, the Bishop of Chester, turned upon Edmund and described his house as a "hole of adders."⁴⁶ The Bishop was formerly William Markham, Headmaster of Westminster and godfather to Edmund's son, but it is not sur-

prising to learn that when, a year or two after his attack upon Burke, the Bishop came up for election to the Literary Club, he was duly blackballed.⁴⁷ It was not, of course, only in the Literary Club that Burke found the sympathy and understanding which he craved. The harmony of his domestic circle was never once troubled, and despite all vicissitudes he was, to his intense satisfaction, able for nearly thirty years to dispense at Beaconsfield a warm, patriarchal hospitality to all distinguished visitors, countrymen and foreigners, as well to an innumerable troop of impecunious Irish kinsfolk whose interests he was always eager to forward in every possible way. Burke corresponded at length on country matters with Arthur Young, the foremost agriculturist of the century, and in the theory and practice of farming he found his sole recreation. When his financial difficulties accumulated to a point at which they threatened to overwhelm him, his patrons, Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Portland, and later Lord Fitzwilliam, rallied to his aid, and saved the fine Palladian pillars of his house from tumbling into ruin about his head.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Cause of English Liberties

BURKE was hardly installed at Beaconsfield before he found himself plunged into the first of the five main political struggles to which his life was devoted. English liberties were being threatened by the attempt of George III to revive some of the former powers of the Crown. In its wider aspect this attempt was a phase in a contest which had been waged ever since the Norman Conquest between the King and the nobles for the support of the people and the direction of the State. In France during the Middle Ages, a weak Crown, with the aid of the people, had successfully curbed a turbulent and irresponsible nobility : in England this process was reversed, and a strong Crown was gradually subjected to the control of an aristocracy which had at first been relatively weak. The result was that by the beginning of the eighteenth century the doctrine of the divine right of kings had been transformed in England into the divine right of the aristocracy ; whereas in France the monarchy was absolute, and the nobles had become no more than powdered and privileged flunkeys. The course of this long contest in England was at times attended by large-scale fluctuations of fortune. During the sixteenth century a Crown, made strong by the support of the people and the rediscovered maxims of Latin jurisprudence, was permitted for three generations to tyrannize over a factious nobility, and indeed over the entire nation. The reaction to this sixteenth-

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF NOBLES

century absolutism was a popular movement during the seventeenth century which ended by overwhelming both Crown and nobles. For the only time in her history England found herself governed by a military dictator, and the people were subject to the hated rule of Cromwell's major-generals. The seventeenth century in England was an age of great political unrest, for even after the restoration of the Monarchy and House of Lords a further revolution was necessary in order to defeat James II's attempt to revive the old prerogative powers of the Crown. After the expulsion of the Stuarts, "Prerogative" was dead, but under George III its ghost returned "with much more strength and far less odium under the name of Influence."¹ Burke strenuously opposed George III's attempt to use the corrupt elements in English political life for the purpose of subverting the hardwon liberties of the English people. He opposed it mainly by endeavouring to recall the aristocracy to a sense of its responsibilities as an independent Estate of the Realm, instead of a mere collection of mercenary Court minions. The main interest of this constitutional struggle was centred for a time about the activities of Wilkes, who returned to England, despite his outlawry, in February, 1768, in order to take part in the General Election. Until the elections were over Wilkes was left undisturbed, but after he had been returned for Middlesex at the top of the poll he surrendered to his outlawry and was committed to gaol.

When the new Parliament met on May 10th, 1768, a large crowd gathered outside the King's Bench Prison, demanding that the Member for Middlesex should be released. The authorities had taken all precautions; the mob was ordered to disperse; the troops opened fire. Six people were killed and many injured, and the

high approbation of the King and his Ministers was ostentatiously conveyed to the military authorities. The "massacre of St. George's Fields" evoked widespread indignation and crowds invaded the vicinity of Parliament, calling for "Wilkes and Liberty." Shortly afterwards Wilkes was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and to a fine of a thousand pounds for his old offences of blasphemy and seditious libel. While he was in prison, Wilkes managed to secure the publication of a letter in which Ministers were accused of deliberately planning in advance the horrid massacre of St. George's Fields. This comment was promptly voted by the House of Commons to be an insolent, scandalous and seditious libel, and Wilkes was expelled from the House. He was at once re-elected and again expelled, and the dispute between the Government and the Freeholders of Middlesex engrossed the attention of the nation. Middlesex was unique among English counties during the eighteenth century, in being free from the electoral dominance of territorial magnates and country gentlemen ; it was a singularly appropriate arena, therefore, for a contest of this nature. Burke vehemently opposed the action of the House of Commons in unseating Wilkes. After Wilkes had been elected a third time, he was again expelled and declared to be incapable of serving during the lifetime of that Parliament. The Middlesex Election contest evoked extraordinary passion, because Wilkes symbolized the spirit of popular opposition to the arbitrary policy of the Court, and the bribed majority of the House of Commons. After Wilkes had been returned for the fourth time at the top of the poll, the House took the unprecedented step of declaring that his defeated opponent, a Colonel Luttrell, "ought to have been" elected, and Luttrell was accordingly invited to take his seat. Young Charles Fox, who did

MIDDLESEX ELECTION DISPUTE

not finally go over to Burke and Rockingham for several years, spoke in favour of the unseating of Wilkes. He declared that the contest lay between the House of Commons and the lowest scum of the people: "What," he asked,² "can be lower than the inhabitants of Billingsgate and Wapping?" Burke retorted² that in such a contest he was on the side of the people, who needed to be protected from a corrupt Court which was dead to all sense of decency or shame. Burke took an active part in organizing petitions and protest meetings against the action of the House of Commons in the Middlesex Election dispute. He was so active against the Government that in some quarters he was unjustly suspected of being the author of "Junius's" letters, the astonishing and indecent violence of which was symptomatic of the growing volume of discontent in the country.

Early in 1769 Burke produced a volume, which he called *Observations on a Late Publication Intituled "The Present State of the Nation."* George Grenville, the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, had recently published a tract upon this subject, in which he attempted to prove that his successors in office since 1765, among whom the Rockingham Whigs were the first and chief offenders, had brought discredit on their country and ruin on its commerce. Grenville had compared the economic situation of France unfavourably with that of England and had suggested that it would be wise to relieve the existing political tension by extending the franchise at home, and by adding American representatives to the British Parliament. Burke replied to these arguments on behalf of his Party. He examined the state of French finances, and remarked³ that their condition was so appalling that he hourly looked for "some extraordinary convulsion in that whole

system the effect of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture." This was a remarkable prophecy, and Burke showed hardly less prescience in disposing of Grenville's arguments in regard to the franchise and America. He said ⁴ that the existing voters were so indescribably corrupt that he had rather add to their weight and independency by lessening their numbers than extend the area of corruption by adding to them. As for America, he pointed out that geography was invincibly opposed to the possibility of a parliamentary union. Burke concluded his *Observations* with a defence of the American policy of Lord Rockingham. He said ⁵ that it was of no importance whether Rockingham's action in repealing the Stamp Act was reconcilable with the Declaratory Act in legal speculation : " It is reconciled in politics : and politics ought to be adjusted not to human reasonings but to human nature ; of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part."

Burke's persistent opposition to all suggestions for a measure of Parliamentary Reform was unpractical, but his prejudices in this as in other questions were inveterate and unconquerable. It was certain that a serious demand for reform would one day arise, if only as a means of ensuring more efficient administration. Burke had faith in the divine wisdom which had evolved, as a result of a long process of historical evolution, the eighteenth-century Constitution of Britain ; he had no faith at all in the ordered continuance of that divine evolutionary process. The difference which more than twenty years later was to divide the Whigs was foreshadowed in this negative attitude of Burke's mind, but for the present the danger was latent and not apparent.

In the Autumn of 1769, Lord Chatham recovered his health. He returned to the House of Lords, and

attacked the Government with such effect that Camden, the Lord Chancellor, succumbed. Camden declared that he disapproved of the arbitrary actions of his colleagues, and a few days later he was dismissed. The Great Seal was at once offered to Charles Yorke, a member of the Rockingham Party ; he was the weak but ambitious son of a former Lord Chancellor, Hardwicke. Yorke accepted, and was bitterly reproached for doing so by his brother, Lord Hardwicke, and by Rockingham. Under the stress of his emotions Yorke's reason gave way ; in January, 1770, only three days after accepting office, he cut his throat. This disaster gave the indolent Grafton a colourable excuse for resigning ; he was replaced by Lord North in whom the King found a compliant tool, and for the next twelve years King George remained in effect his own Prime Minister. Throughout this period Burke found that it was exceedingly difficult to prevent the leaders of his party from abandoning political life and retiring to their estates in the country. Men like Rockingham, Portland and Richmond had so many interests besides politics to make their lives useful and agreeable that it was often a hard struggle to persuade them to come to Westminster. For long periods the Rockingham Party remained inactive, and only Burke's extraordinary zeal and Rockingham's sense of duty saved it during these years from dissolution. There were two questions at this time in respect of which Burke made great efforts to serve the cause of English liberties. They both concerned the freedom of the Press. Lord Mansfield had recently, in the Court of King's Bench, reaffirmed an old maxim that it was for the judge and not the jury to decide what constituted a libel. Mansfield ruled that the jury was only called upon to decide on the facts of printing and publication, and it was generally held

that he had been provoked by the appearance of "Junius's" letters into making this attack upon the freedom of the Press. The judges were nearly always on the side of authority, and many cases occurred in which indignant juries returned verdicts which were openly at variance with the indubitable facts of printing and publication. Chatham and Camden denounced Mansfield's decision in the Lords, and in March, 1771, Burke helped in the Commons to move a Bill empowering juries to decide on the question of libel. This motion was lost by 218 votes to 72, and Mansfield's decision remained law until Fox's Libel Act of 1792.

The other question in which the freedom of the Press was involved concerned the publication of reports of Debates in Parliament. By a Standing Order of the House such publication was forbidden, but it was an Order which was more honoured in the breach than the observance. The second Parliament of George III made a fetish of secrecy, for which there was some excuse in the almost unbelievable scurrility of the Press; a dispute broke out over this question between Parliament and the Press in February, 1770, and it created as much excitement as the Middlesex Election contest. Various illegal reports of Debates had recently appeared, some of them with opprobrious comments, and the printers and publishers of these were ordered to attend at the Bar of the House of Commons. Burke strongly opposed this Order; on March 12th, 1771, he helped unsuccessfully to divide the House no less than twenty-three times, and kept the Sitting alive until five in the morning. He told the House that it was not bound to exercise every right which it possessed, and that power unregulated by prudence would prove to be terror and end in weakness and humiliation. Some of the offending printers attended at the Bar and were formally reprimanded, but

THAT DEVIL, WILKES !

one, named Miller, refused to attend. Miller was arrested within the precincts of the City by the Messenger of the House of Commons. He promptly gave the Messenger in charge for assault on the ground that the Speaker's Writ had no currency within the chartered boundaries of the City. The case was heard at the Mansion House before the Mayor's Court ; Miller was formally discharged and the Messenger of the House was ordered to find surety for his good behaviour : the House of Commons and the City of London had come into collision.

Of the three aldermen who heard this case two were Members of Parliament, while the third was the redoubtable Wilkes himself. The two Members of Parliament were ordered to attend in their places in the House in order to hear the pleasure of their fellow-members ; Wilkes was ordered to attend at the Bar. Amid intense excitement it became known that Wilkes had defied the order of the House of Commons ; he offered instead to take his seat in Parliament as the Member for Middlesex. The King, saying that he would have no more to do with " that devil, Wilkes," endorsed Lord North's prudent decision to leave Wilkes alone, but the other two aldermen, one of whom was serving his year of office as Lord Mayor, attended in their places and were committed to the Tower. At the same time the Lord Mayor's clerk was ordered to attend at the Bar with his minutes and to strike out the record of the recognizances into which the Messenger of the House had been compelled to enter. The case against the Messenger was then formally quashed by a fiat from the Attorney-General. These arbitrary proceedings recalled the worst manner of the Stuart sovereigns, and the rage of the mob could hardly be restrained. Charles Fox, then a Junior Lord of the Admiralty, who was

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particularly hated on account of the youthful aristocratic insolence which he displayed on every possible occasion, was hauled out of his coach and rolled in the gutter. In the meantime the Lord Mayor and his colleague were visited by Burke and Rockingham in the Tower. They were released after six weeks, and were greeted by immense demonstrations of popular sympathy. Though Wilkes and the printer Miller went unpunished, the House of Commons had gained a nominal victory. Its dignity had, however, suffered, and largely on account of Burke's efforts no attempt was ever subsequently made to enforce the Standing Order of the House against the reporting of Debates.

Before this last tumult occurred Burke published, on April 23rd, 1770, the greatest of his early writings, the *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents*. He had submitted it, before publication, to the approval of his Party chiefs. In a characteristic phrase he pointed out ' that " Rank, and office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world " had lost their reverence and effect. The reason for this loss of confidence was that the Crown, by its pernicious example, had excited every element in the Constitution to attempt to exercise its functions for purely selfish ends instead of for the good of the nation. The only cure was for Ministers to remember that no power was ever given for the sole sake of the holder : " The laws reach but a very little way. Constitute Government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of powers which are left at large to the prudence and uprightness of Ministers of State. Even all the use and potency of the laws depend upon them. Without them your Commonwealth is no better than a scheme upon paper, and not a living, active, effective Constitution." ' 8

THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS

Burke thought that some good might be effected by reviving the time-honoured weapon of Impeachment as a means for ensuring the control of Parliament over the executive ; he suggested further that the electors should be excited to a more strict control over their representatives. But the problem was, in Burke's view, a moral and not a material one ; he had no faith at all in such makeshift expedients as more frequent Parliaments, disfranchisement of place-men, or electoral reform. The implication behind Burke's argument was that only the Rockingham Party was really capable of giving back to English political life the confidence and harmony which it had lost. This interested motive detracted from the force of Burke's conclusions, but in fact his positive conclusions were few and vague. The whole virtue of Burke's pamphlet lay in the luminous generalizations in which it abounded concerning the nature of political truth and human psychology. In this respect it remains one of the very small number of political tracts which have retained a permanent appeal.

In the meantime Burke continued his struggle for the ordered liberty of the subject in a variety of fields. His championship of the American cause resulted in his being elected, on December 20th, 1770,⁹ Agent in London for the Colony of New York. His salary was fixed at five hundred pounds a year,¹⁰ and a further one hundred and forty pounds was voted¹¹ in 1774 for contingent expenses. In August, 1772, his championship of the chartered privileges of the East India Company against all attempts at Parliamentary intervention led to his being offered¹² the first place in a Commission of three Supervisors which the Directors proposed to send out to India. This Commission had been given authority to investigate, and if necessary to rectify, every department of the Company's administration, and it was hoped in

this way to forestall the threat of Parliamentary interference in the Company's affairs. Although his salary would have been ten thousand pounds a year, whilst the Commission was in being, Burke declined this proposal. He consulted his family and all his friends, but in the end he came to the conclusion that his interests would best be served by remaining with Rockingham. Burke took his decision at a time when the outlook at home and abroad appeared very grey ; he noted in his Preface to the *Annual Register* for 1772 that that year was the most fatal to public liberty and the rights of mankind that had ever been seen. In the course of the year the first partition of Poland took place, and the Constitutions of France and Sweden were both altered in the direction of absolutism. In these circumstances the Opposition began to lose heart, and the Rockingham Party, weary of Parliamentary futility, came to a resolution¹³ to maintain silence unless any new invasions of the Constitution should occur, or unless foreign troubles, by increasing the unpopularity of the Court, should give the Opposition an opportunity to attack it. The controversy in which the Rockingham Party was most directly interested concerned the public renewal of the dispute between the Duke of Portland and Sir James Lowther. The new Parliament had duly passed the Nullum Tempus Act, which made sixty years' tenure of land constitute a good prescriptive title, but a clause in the Act allowed Lowther a year's grace in which to establish his title if he could. Being a cynical brute, Lowther chose the most cold-blooded method he could find ; he applied to the Courts for Writs of Ejectment against hundreds of the unfortunate tenants of the disputed estates. The whole of Cumberland was thrown into a state of terror and confusion ; in a single day no less than four hundred of such writs were issued. Lowther's

methods were so flagrantly anti-social that an attempt was made to circumvent him by a special Act of Parliament. An Amending Bill was introduced to strike out from the Nullum Tempus Act the clause under which he was permitted to embark upon his cruel process of mass-litigation. The Amending Bill would certainly have passed but for a magnificent speech by Fox, who opposed it on the ground that it was directed against a particular individual, and that it was retrospective in its effect. This was certainly the most vulnerable aspect of the Bill, and Fox may have had in mind another Act which had lately been passed in St. Vincent. The Council of that island had recently passed an Act to invalidate retrospectively the claim of Richard Burke to a large area of extremely valuable land in which Fox was deeply interested. After listening to Fox the House decided in favour of Lowther by a majority of only ten votes. Lowther's litigation accordingly continued until he was non-suited on a technical point. Five years had still to pass before Portland was confirmed in possession of his disputed estates, but in later years he amply repayed Burke for his zeal in this affair by helping to relieve the financial necessities of himself and his brother.

Burke's thought was now completely mature ; it rested upon a solid bedrock of conviction and he was fully prepared, when he thought that circumstances demanded it, to act against the less firmly rooted opinions of his Party. In February, 1772, a Petition was introduced into the House of Commons praying for the Repeal of an Act which required clergymen, undergraduates and others to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. This Petition was originated by the Unitarians, some of whom still hoped at this time to avoid an overt break with the Church of England ;

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it was drawn up by an association which used to meet at the Feathers Tavern, in the Strand. Most of Burke's friends supported the Repeal, on the ground that it involved the liberty of the subject, but Burke himself opposed it on the ground that inside the Church some standard of faith was a necessity. He held that without such a standard the word liberty became a meaningless symbol, and he voted ¹⁴ accordingly with the Tory and High Church majority of the House. The difference which was disclosed between Burke and the majority of his Party on this occasion afforded the first hint of the gulf which twenty years later was to open between them. Burke never altered his views upon fundamental issues, but his convictions were strongly reinforced less than twelve months later, when he paid a visit to Paris. Burke crossed the Channel on January 12th, 1773, partly in order to settle his son in a French family at Auxerre before sending him up to Oxford, partly in order to escape an awkward debate in the House of Commons upon the treatment accorded to the Caribbees in the island of St. Vincent. On leaving Auxerre Burke proceeded to Paris where he found himself the centre of attraction among a group of distinguished men and women who had very little use for many of the values in which he believed. French society at that period was civilized almost to excess ; it was free from all religious, intellectual, or moral prejudices, and there was no subject which was not regarded as open to debate. Burke made the most of his opportunities, and he familiarized himself at first hand with the ideas of the rival salons into which the society of the French capital was divided. For the first time in his life Burke mixed on entirely equal terms with the orchids of the human race ; he supped with the Duchesse de Luxembourg, and savoured the solemn plausibilities of France. In

EXCURSION TO PARIS

Paris Burke was no longer an Irish adventurer of obscure origin and desperate fortunes ; he was a distinguished English statesman and man of letters whom it was a delight to honour. He was courted on every side by the bearers of famous names, and Burke was not the man to remain immune from the subtle charm of this flattery. In after years, when revolution had scattered this society to the four corners of Europe, Burke sent his son to advise the Royalists in exile, and he opened his house at Beaconsfield to a continuous stream of refugee aristocrats. Burke made an excellent impression on Madame du Deffand, although she commented ¹⁵ on his atrocious French ; in the salon of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse he met most of the Encyclopædists, and was profoundly influenced by the encounter. He visited Versailles, and was dazzled by his vision of the eighteen-year-old Dauphiness, "glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy." There, too, he saw du Barry, the royal mistress, so innocent of the flummeries of prostitution that "vice itself seemed to lose half its evil by losing all its grossness." ¹⁶ Amid these scenes of sophistication, frivolity and intense intellectual activity Burke made no secret of the drift of his own opinions. He became so much the mode in Paris that, according to Horace Walpole, he almost made Christianity fashionable. "St. Patrick himself," Walpole told ¹⁷ Lady Ossory, "did not make more converts." Burke returned to England troubled in spirit. It was as though he had visited the Cities of the Plain before the brimstone descended. He had conceived a prophetic horror of French speculation and enlightenment, and he set himself henceforward the task of making sure that the average Englishman's reaction to public questions should continue to be that of a Christian, and not that of a smuggler of adulterated metaphysics. On March 17th,

1773, shortly after his return to England, Burke sounded a shrill note of warning in the House of Commons. He was speaking in favour of a Bill for relieving Dissenters from the necessity, which was very rarely enforced, of subscribing to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Burke had no objection to the proposal to relieve Dissenters from this necessity, because they were already outside the Church and no question, therefore, arose of enforcing any standard of conformity in their case. Burke said that he regarded toleration as a part of Christianity, but on the subject of atheism he gave the rein to his passion. No society, he declared,¹⁸ could afford to tolerate atheists : they were the outlaws not of this country but of the human race. He suggested that the pillars of the British State were already being undermined by the insidious propaganda of these criminal wretches ; and he called for a united front on the part of every man who accepted Christianity, or who, even if at the moment he felt himself unable to believe in the divinity of Christ, yet wished that he could so believe. Only in this way would it be possible successfully to oppose the abominable assaults of the great ministers of darkness who were everywhere secretly at work seeking to disrupt the foundations of the civil and religious order of Europe.

Burke's visit to Paris marked a turning-point in his life, and he now assumed the lead in opposing the main current of the rationalist intellectual life of his age. Henceforward he was the prophet of the ancient order in Europe, but in the meantime his absence abroad, while the House debated a motion condemning the injustice of the recent military expedition against the Caribbees in St. Vincent, had excited unfavourable comment. As soon as this motion had been defeated the reform of the East India Company's charter became the question of the hour. Burke was bitterly opposed to reform on a variety

of grounds which he dwelt upon at length in the House of Commons. He said that it was the sudden plunder of the East which gave the final blow to the freedom of Rome ; what reason had we to expect a better fate ? If the patrimony of India were suffered to fall into the hands of the King's present advisers, the stream of corruption which had already invaded English liberties must sweep away in one mighty flood the last remains of freedom in England as well as in India. The present Government was incompetent to govern England and America with wisdom ; it was absurd to suppose that it was equal to taking over responsibility for the Empire of the East. The whole scheme for rectifying abuses in the Company's administration was simply a pretext for robbing the Proprietors of East India Stock.¹⁹ The force of these specious arguments was considerably weakened by the knowledge that the Burkes were financially interested in preventing any interference with the East India Company's charter. Such interference, as Burke knew when he spoke in favour of the sanctity of chartered rights, was certain to involve a reduction in the Company's annual rate of dividend. Unfortunately, the Reports of the Secret and Select Committees which had been appointed to consider the Indian problem were all so highly condemnatory that the conscience of the British people was profoundly stirred : " The groans of India have mounted to Heaven," Horace Walpole exclaimed ²⁰ to Sir Horace Mann, ". . . oh, my dear Sir, we have outdone the Spaniards in Peru." " India," Chatham wrote,²¹ " teems with iniquities so rank as to smell to Earth and Heaven." General Burgoyne, the Chairman of the Select Committee, spoke ²² of " the most atrocious abuses that ever stained the name of civil government." It was clear that some action was needed, and there was a tremendous outburst of moral

indignation against the East India Company. The Company made a last-minute attempt to forestall the threat of Parliamentary interference by nominating six Supervisors who were to proceed to India armed with plenary powers. An Act was rushed through Parliament at once to prohibit them from starting. Burke vigorously opposed this restrictive measure. He complained that Parliament was only concerned to prevent the Company from doing its duty, and he drew a distinction between what Parliament had the power and what it had the right to do. He admitted ²³ in the *Annual Register* that serious abuses had arisen in the Company's administration, though he thought that some of these had been much exaggerated. He added, very dispassionately, that riches, dominion and patronage must always prove a strong temptation to the continence of power. But the ruin of William was not regarded by Edmund in any dispassionate light. William had staked his last shilling on the maintenance of the Company's charter ; he had gambled and lost, and when India Stock fell disastrously as a result of the Government's interference, Edmund's affections overflowed to such an extent that they swept away every landmark of common sense. He drew up ²⁴ an absurd Memorandum, addressed to members of the Opposition, in which he seriously suggested that the Proprietors of East India Stock should march in procession from the India House in Leadenhall Street to the Palace of Westminster, and that standing in an attitude of supplication in all the corridors they should "in the most humble manner request the Members not to take away the rights of their countrymen." Burke said he felt sure that the House of Commons would be more ready to respond to such an emotional appeal than it would be to any rational arguments which might be addressed to it.

In June, 1773, North's Regulating Act became law. It gave the Crown a measure of control over the government of India, and made Warren Hastings, formerly Governor of Bengal, the first Governor-General of British India. Burke opposed the passage of this Act in all its stages. He said ²⁵ that it was based on no principle of convenience or necessity, and that it violated the law of Nature, the law of the land and public faith. If there was any truth in what the Reports of the Committee of Secrecy had said about the former maladministration of Bengal, it was extraordinary that Warren Hastings, the man most responsible, should be entrusted with such powers under the Regulating Act. Burke took no part in the attack which was made in Parliament at this time upon Clive's conduct in India, because he regarded Clive as having acted constitutionally as the agent of a Chartered Company. He began, however, at once to concentrate his fury and regret at the ruin of William, and the end of all his hopes, about the heads of those who had now become responsible, under the Regulating Act, for the government of India. So blind is love, and so strong was its hold on Edmund's judgment, that the Indian problem soon came to wear in his mind a simple, clear-cut appearance of white and black. On the one side he pictured William, ruined by his stock-jobbing, as a martyr in the cause of chartered rights and constitutional freedom; on the other, he pictured Hastings, raised to power by an unwarranted act of Government interference, as a symbol of William's discomfiture, and the living incarnation of Court and Ministerial corruption.

When Burke returned to London from Paris he found Johnson's Literary Club reinforced by the election of Garrick, Boswell, Fox and others. The membership of this Club was too exclusive to include either William or

Richard Burke, and accordingly, on Edmund's proposition,²⁶ another Dining-Club came into existence, the membership of which to some extent overlapped that of the famous Club itself. It used to meet at the St. James's Coffee House, and its membership included all the Burkes, Reynolds, Richard Cumberland, Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick and William Hickey. Oliver Goldsmith, owing to the possession of one or two mannerisms, was always liable to be made the butt of any company in which he was well known. One evening during the winter of 1773-4 at the St. James's Coffee House, when Burke and Johnson were present, the diners started to write impromptu epitaphs on each other, but chiefly on Goldsmith.²⁷ Garrick's effort is the only one which has been preserved ; it ran :

Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll ;
He wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

Goldsmith was nonplussed at the time, but when he next appeared at the St. James's Coffee House, and was made to listen to a number of new epitaphs on himself, he produced a variety of roughly sketched epitaphs on his friends, which he had prepared. He was engaged in polishing these, and piecing them together under the title of *Retaliation*, when death interrupted him in April, 1774.

It was on the evening when Goldsmith started to retaliate that Burke, who all his life had a weakness for bad puns, remarked²⁸ that an epitaph might be regarded as a "grave" epigram. Parts of *Retaliation* were passed from hand to hand among Goldsmith's friends ; they caused some heart-burnings and still more apprehension as to what the final draft might contain. Edmund Burke had taken no part in the baiting

BORN FOR THE UNIVERSE

of Goldsmith, but Goldsmith included all the Burkes in *Retaliation*, and his lines on Edmund are well known :

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much ;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to Party gave up what was meant for Mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote ;
Who, too deep for his hearers, yet went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit :
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit ;
For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient ;
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed or in place, Sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

These lines were a most admirable hit. For all his wisdom Burke was hopelessly unpractical ; he was too much the philosopher in action, and he lacked the arts of insinuation and address. Even by eighteenth-century standards Burke's speeches were often intolerably diffuse ; he had no feeling for his audience, and after the accession of a large body of young men to Parliament at the General Election of 1784, the greatest of English Parliamentary orators became known, colloquially, as " the Dinner-Bell." Burke spoke always with a pronounced brogue, which helped to emphasize his strangeness, and his gestures when he was on his feet were ungainly. He was violent and excitable, and when he was really roused he became capable of saying or doing almost anything ; his friends more than once had to seize his coat-tails and haul him by main force into his place. The spectacles which Burke began to wear in middle

Feb 8 1791

We, Members of the Club, feeling
the great inconvenience we labour
under; from a total inattention to our
accounts; and remembering at the
same time the great care and regularity
with which those accounts were kept
when under the inspection of Sir
Joseph Banks; do now make it
our earnest request that he would
reassume the Direction.

Joshua Reynolds

James Boswell

Edm Burke

Cragg Elliot

Rev. Horfok

Macartney

[Signature]

[Signature] Upper Office

C. J. Fox

R. A. Burke

Wm. Ham
P. C. C. C. C.

A Request by Members of The Club

THE GAME OF EPITAPHS

life sat somewhat uneasily upon his nose ; they were the cartoonists' delight, and he was nearly always caricatured as a Jesuit. Burke shared Samuel Johnson's affection for Goldsmith, and when he heard the news of Goldsmith's death he burst into tears. Goldsmith's memorial in Westminster Abbey was carved by Nollekens, but the formal epitaph, which Johnson was asked to compose, did not at first find favour with Goldsmith's friends. To avoid unpleasantness Burke dictated a round robin, suggesting certain alterations, which Reynolds delivered and which Johnson received with a good grace. But when he came to the sentence in which he was asked to use English instead of Latin his patience gave out : " I wonder that Joe Warton,* a scholar by profession, should be such a fool. I should have thought 'Mund Burke would have had more sense." He requested ²⁹ Reynolds to inform the dissentients that he was willing to alter the inscription in any way they pleased, as to the sense, but he said that he could never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription. So ended the game of epitaphs.

* Headmaster of Winchester and a member of the Literary Club.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Cause of America

AFTER the passage of North's Regulating Act, which settled the government of India for eleven years from 1773, the main interest of the constitutional struggle shifted to America. The question at issue was whether the British Parliament had the right to impose taxes on the colonists, and it was a question to which it was impossible, as Burke realized more fully than any of his contemporaries, to return a plain answer of yes or no. Burke urged ¹ that America should be left free to tax herself: "I am not here going into the distinction of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them." Unfortunately the Americans made no effort to tax themselves and Burke admitted that in time of war the British Parliament might find it necessary to tax America. Such power, he said, ought to be used only for the purpose of imperial defence, and not as a means of supply, but by making this point Burke showed that he was unable to avoid entering into one of those "metaphysical" distinctions which he hated and feared. Burke hoped that it might still be possible to restore the former unsuspecting confidence of the colonists in the mother country, but the means of doing this were absent from the structure of the Empire in the eighteenth century. The Americans were growing into nationhood, and as Burke pointed out, they were fighting for the same liberties,

including the principle of no taxation without representation and consent, as those which Englishmen had given their lives to defend during previous centuries. It was only after the Commons had won the right to vote taxes that their legislative independence was secured. The only way in which to safeguard the legislative independence of America would have been to remodel the Empire as a federation of self-governing States. For this purpose it would have been necessary to release the Crown from the direct government of any of the constituent parts of the Empire, in order that it might be used as an imperial bond of union. However, throughout the eighteenth century the Crown remained an active factor in British politics, and any exercise of its attributes through channels other than the British Parliament would have been denounced as an unconstitutional reversion to "Prerogative." ² Had Rockingham been in power with Burke at his side during the critical years it is possible that a conflict might have been postponed, but it could hardly have been indefinitely avoided. There was a radical side to the American Revolution which has not always been sufficiently stressed by historians, and from which Burke, in opposition, averted his eyes. Had Burke been in office his attention would almost certainly have been directed to this aspect of the dispute. The American doctrine of the rights of man was directly derived from those French metaphysicians whom Burke detested so bitterly, and had he been in power it seems probable that the violent period of his counter-revolutionary Toryism might have been antedated by at least fifteen years.

Burke's scruples on the subject of American taxation were not shared by most of his countrymen. His friend Johnson, in meeting the argument that England had never previously taxed the Colonies, coolly observed ³ : "We do not put a calf into the plow ; we wait till he

THE CAUSE OF AMERICA

is an ox." This, in its extreme form, was the attitude of mind which Burke fought in Parliament and outside it for the next ten years.

The modest duty of threepence upon every pound of tea imported into America was the only item of externally imposed taxation which had not been repealed in 1770. It had been retained for the sake of principle alone, but the Americans were resolute and united in their opposition to it. After the outrage to the tea-ships in Boston Harbour in December, 1773, the British Government embarked upon a foolish course of legislative reprisals, and the situation drifted rapidly towards armed revolt. Before any overt act of war was committed King George dissolved Parliament, and Burke found himself placed temporarily in a state of considerable embarrassment. Lord Verney's affairs were in such a condition that he could no longer afford to retain Edmund and William Burke in Parliament for his two pocket boroughs of Wendover and Great Bedwin. He was compelled, for the sake of his creditors, to sell the representation of both seats. William Burke was in a worse plight than Edmund, since he was utterly ruined and in danger of being arrested for debt if he should once lose the protection which his membership of Parliament conferred on him. On the other hand Edmund, who had to face each year a heavy deficit on his domestic budget, was already under large and growing financial obligations to Rockingham. In these circumstances Edmund passed a wretched summer, and he told ⁴ Rockingham that when he was alone he sometimes fell into a melancholy which was inexpressible, and which threatened to overwhelm him completely. He said that he had serious thoughts of retiring from public life on the ground of his unfitness and of his misfortunes. When Mrs. Thrale visited Gregories at the end of September, 1774, with her

husband and Dr. Johnson, she was shocked ⁵ to see Edmund Burke return home late at night with Lord Verney from an election meeting in an excessively drunken condition. But Burke, though he was no puritan, was not wedded to the bottle; he needed relief from the cares which beset him thickly at this time. His friend William Dowdeswell, a member of the Rockingham Party who led the Opposition in the Commons, had recently developed lung trouble, and lay at the point of death, while some of the other party leaders wrote ⁶ to Burke to express the view that it was hopeless to attempt any longer to influence the course of events. Rockingham was unable, despite Edmund's importunity, to find a safe seat for William, but he managed to arrange his own three rotten boroughs in such a way as to accommodate Edmund at Malton, in Yorkshire. Before he did so, Edmund's name was proposed at Bristol, together with that of a prominent local merchant named Henry Cruger. Bristol returned two members to Parliament, and both the sitting members, Lord Clare and Matthew Brickdale, belonged to the Court Party. The City of Bristol was traditionally Tory, but the American boycott of British trade had hit the citizens so hard that the Whigs were encouraged to make a great effort to capture both seats. When Burke's name was proposed on October 5th, 1774, his adoption was violently opposed ⁷ by Cruger, who wanted to stand as the sole Whig candidate. Burke's closest friend in Bristol was Richard Champion, the porcelain manufacturer, who immediately rode to Bath, where Burke was then staying, to advise him of the position. Burke returned to London and thence started at once for Yorkshire, in order to present himself to the electors at Malton. On his way north he was robbed by a couple of highwaymen on Finchley Common.

THE CAUSE OF AMERICA

The Poll at Bristol opened on October 7th, and Lord Clare, finding that he was likely to be defeated, formally renounced his candidature and retired to Bath in disgust. Clare's retirement left only two candidates in the field for the two seats—so that it looked for a moment as though Bristol might be represented by one Tory and one Whig. Messengers were, however, despatched immediately to summon Burke back from Yorkshire, and Champion proposed Burke's name as the second Whig candidate. Brickdale, the Tory, very naturally objected ; he urged that Burke's nomination was illegal on the ground that the election had already begun. The matter was argued before the Sheriffs, but it was ruled that the election should proceed, with Burke's name added, under protest. Champion's messengers, on reaching Malton, found that Burke had already been elected there, but the chance of representing Bristol was too tempting to be missed. Bristol during the eighteenth century was the second city in the kingdom, and Burke was eager to consolidate his reputation as the champion of the commercial interests of his countrymen. He had already, in April, 1774, been accorded the Thanks of the Committee of Trade at Manchester for his services to British Commerce, but Manchester at that time was unrepresented in Parliament. Burke obtained the consent of his friends at Malton to renounce the honour which they had just done him, and leaving Malton at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, October 11th, 1774, he reached Bristol at 1 p.m. on Thursday, the 13th. Proceeding at once to the Guildhall, Burke mounted the hustings and pledged himself to protect British commerce, and to reconcile British Constitutional rights in America with the just liberties of the American people. This latter pledge, unhappily, was to prove impossible of fulfilment. The

DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

poll lasted a month, and on November 3rd, 1774, the result was announced, as follows :

Henry Cruger :	3,565
Edmund Burke :	2,707
Matthew Brickdale :	2,456
Lord Clare :	283 *

Cruger and Burke were accordingly declared to have been elected, and although Brickdale petitioned against Burke's election and pleaded his case for seven days before a Parliamentary Committee, his Petition was rejected. A story was current in London to the effect that Cruger, when his turn came to address the electors, exclaimed simply : " I say ditto to Mr. Burke." Actually, of course, Burke followed Cruger, and he went out of his way to repudiate for himself the undertaking which Cruger had just given, to be bound in Parliament by the instructions of his constituents. He treated the electors of Bristol to a profound analysis of the distinction between a representative and a delegate ; he declared that authoritative instructions which a member was bound blindly to obey were things utterly unknown to the law of the land, and alien to the spirit of the Constitution. Burke's speech ⁸ contained the clearest pronouncement which has ever been made upon the duties owed by Members of Parliament to their constituents, but it may be doubted whether the hustings at Bristol, at a moment of riot and jubilation after the declaration of the poll, was quite the most suitable place Burke could have chosen for the discussion of such difficult and controversial matter. After the dismissal of Brickdale's Petition, Cruger asked ⁹ Burke to join him in a triumphal procession through the streets of Bristol. Burke hotly

* Votes cast before Clare renounced his candidature.

refused to join in any such "foolish piece of pageantry," and Cruger had to enjoy his triumph alone.

Burke and his party enjoyed one great source of encouragement in the new Parliament: Charles Fox, who was acknowledged to be the phenomenon of the age, was falling increasingly under Burke's influence. Fox was still nominally attached to the Court Party, but he had been dismissed, in February, 1774, from his Junior Lordship at the Treasury; he had previously offended the Court by his opposition to the Royal Marriage Act, by his dissolute habits, and by his indecent importunity in the affair of Richard Burke's purchase of West Indian lands. Burke and Fox had been intimate for some years, despite the astonishing disparity between their ages, temperaments, politics and habits of life. With every day that passed Burke's ascendancy grew stronger, and Fox, although he did not distinctly join the Rockingham Party at once, henceforward acted generally with it. Burke and Fox were drawn together by a common love of literature, a deep humanity, and the natural attraction of one first-class mind for another; the union of these two strengthened immeasurably the quality of the Opposition in the Commons. Burke was pre-eminently an orator: Fox was a born master of debate. Burke's speeches were the fruit of immense research, and the most elaborate preparation: Fox never in his life prepared a speech, and trusted always to the inspiration of the moment. Burke's periods were rounded; his speeches were lofty, magnificent essays which alternately bored and delighted the House. The flood of his oratory rolled over the heads of his audience, but when the waters subsided the old familiar landmarks reappeared. Burke's speeches made a tremendous impression when they were read, and many of the most

famous of them were specially prepared for the Press ; they often, however, fell exceedingly flat at the time when they were delivered. Burke's manner, when he was on his feet, was provocative, and he was incapable of feeling the pulse of his audience. On the other hand Fox, owing everything to his manner which was magically attractive, held his audience entranced. His words tumbled over each other ; they poured out in an artless, repetitive jumble which was as persuasive as the siren's song at the time when it was uttered, although it often looked terrible in cold print. Together Burke and Fox formed an ideal combination, for it can seldom have happened that two friends should each have possessed in such a degree the qualities which the other lacked.

The new Parliament met on November 30th, 1774, and despite the loss of Bristol the Government, by means of a liberal use of bribery, succeeded in increasing its majority. Petitions continued to pour in against the policy of coercing America, but they were all shelved, and a fresh spate of " Penal " legislation was initiated. In these circumstances war was inevitable, but a month before the first blood was spilt Burke rose, on March 22nd, 1775, to make a speech on *Conciliation* which it would be difficult to praise too highly. On the wings of his oratory Burke attained the furthest summit of political wisdom, and as literature his prose remains imperishable and unsurpassed. He began by analysing the condition of the Colonies, and in doing so he called attention ¹⁰ to the whaling industry of New England :

" Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits, while we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the

opposite region of Polar cold, that they are at the Antipodes, and engaged under the frozen Serpent of the South. . . . Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the Poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the Coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been carried by this recent people—a people who are, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things—when I know that the Colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious Government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection—when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die within me—my rigor relents—I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.”

Burke traced to its source the colonists’ fierce love of liberty ; he considered, amongst other things, the geographical remoteness of their situation, and he exclaimed : ¹¹

“ Who are you, that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of Nature ? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all Nations who have extensive Empire ;

and it happens in all the forms in which Empire can be thrown. In large bodies the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt, and Arabia, and Kurdistan, as he governs Thrace ; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein that he may govern at all ; and the whole force and vigor of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her Provinces, is perhaps not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies, too ; she submits ; she watches time. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law of extensive and detached Empire."

Burke argued that it was impossible to denounce the colonists as criminals : " I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against an whole people." ¹² He said that legal right became ridiculous when it was opposed to humanity, reason, justice and expediency : " My hold of the Colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are strong as links of iron." ¹³ Reaching the summit of his argument, he cried : ¹⁴ " Magnanimity in Politics is not seldom the truest wisdom ; and a great Empire and little minds go ill together."

Burke's effort was made in vain, and once the War of American Independence had started, there was little that the Opposition could usefully do. Burke in any case suffered a breakdown of health, due to over-work and worry, during the Spring and Summer of 1775. As

soon as he recovered he used his best efforts to try and induce the Irish Parliament to withhold all extraordinary grants and supplies. He hoped that England's difficulties might prove to be Ireland's opportunity to secure some redress of grievances, and he suggested¹⁵ that, infatuated as they were, Ministers would not wish to have a contest with the whole Empire on their hands at once. Burke bombarded the Duke of Richmond with letters upon this subject, and partly by way of reply, Richmond begged Burke to allow Romney to paint his portrait :

"I think a portrait of you merely looking one in the face," the Duke observed¹⁶ amiably, "and doing nothing, can never be like, as it must give a representation so different from your real nature. I wish therefore to have you painted doing something. The act of speaking can never be well painted, especially in a single figure. Writing will, I think, do very well, and will suit you exceedingly.

"Pray, therefore, call at Mr. Romney's in Cavendish Square (his name is on the door) and begin. I beg the size may be that which is commonly called a head, and that it may be doing something."

Despite all Burke's energy, the Rockingham Party came to an unfortunate resolution to stay away from Parliament. Burke¹⁷ agreed with Rockingham that it was depressing continually "to spin out of our bowels, under the frowns of the Court, and the hisses of the People, the little slender thread of a peevish and captious opposition, unworthy of our cause, and ourselves." Burke's metaphor was indelicate, and the decision of an important section of the Opposition to sulk, like Achilles, in its tents, was certainly a wrong one. However hopeless the cause might appear, it would have

been better for the Opposition to stand its ground, rather than to leave the popular hostility to the Government's policy no option except to seek expression through extra-Parliamentary tumults and agitation. In a "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol" dated April 3rd, 1777, Burke explained to his constituents the reasons why he had not always thought it worth while, on recent occasions, to attend the House of Commons. He said that the slightest hope of being able to do good there would be sufficient to recall him to a field which he had quitted with regret. Burke complained that he had lived to see prudence and conformity to circumstances entirely disregarded by the Government in its handling of the American question. He added ¹⁸ a pregnant sentence in which, though he spoke as a professed Whig, the quintessence of English Conservatism was contained : "So truly has Prudence (constituted as the god of this Lower World) the entire dominion over every exercise of power committed into its hands !" Burke himself saw plainly that the policy of staying away from Parliament was wrong, but he explained ¹⁹ to Fox that it was impossible to expect a great deal of activity and enterprise from men who were so outstandingly fortunate in the possession of plentiful fortunes, assured rank and quiet homes. For himself Burke adored even these aristocratic failings of the leaders of his Party, and he boasted ²⁰ to the Sheriffs of Bristol that he worshipped the Constitution of their fathers "In company with the Saviles, the Dowdeswells, the Wentworths, the Bentincks ; with the Lennoxes, the Manchesters, the Keppels, the Saunderses ; with the temperate, permanent, hereditary virtue of the whole House of Cavendish." He added that any person who supposed that he had taken up this kind of society for the purpose of gratifying low, personal pride, or ambitious interest was mistaken, and knew

nothing of the world. It would have been nearer the truth to say that Burke himself knew little of the world when he opened his heart so unguardedly to the citizens of a great commercial town. It was inevitable that he should be accused of vulgar snobbery when he turned those famous names over so lovingly upon his tongue. Burke's attitude towards the Whig territorial magnates was that of a tutelary priest in the presence of a row of sacred images. Their names, so intimately bound up with the ordered, historical evolution of the British State, set his imagination in a blaze, but even in the eighteenth century the intensity of Burke's particular form of image-worship could hardly fail to provoke good-natured smiles from some of the images themselves, in addition to the jeers of the iconoclasts.

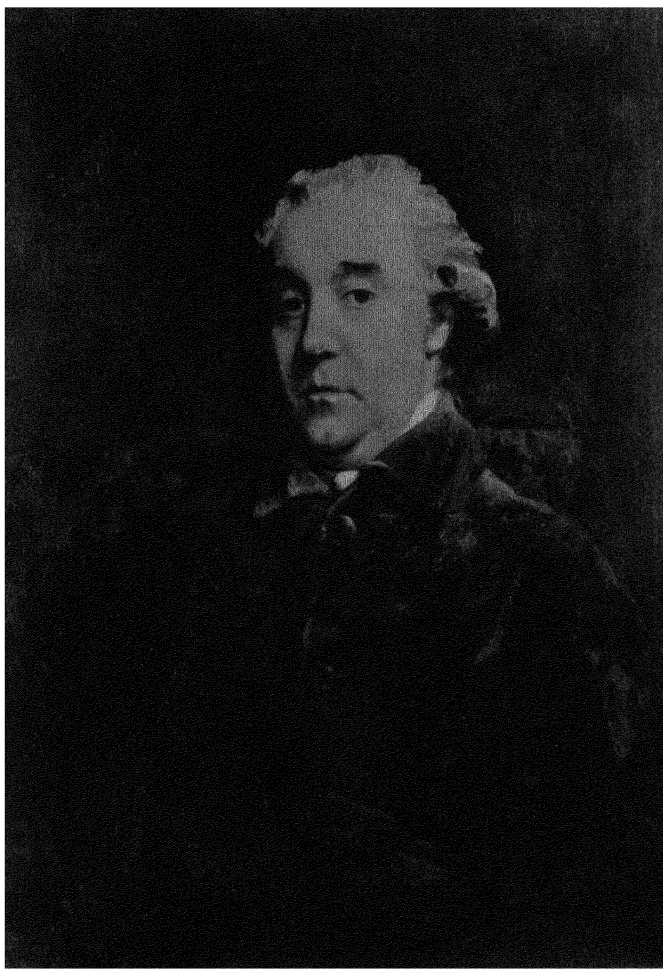
In October, 1777, the first phase of the War of American Independence was ended by the surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga. Thereafter the French were encouraged to intervene in order to revenge themselves upon England for their losses during the Seven Years War. England was not the first of the great powers to call in a new world to redress the balance of the old, and in the face of French menaces the Parliamentary Opposition made one more effort to induce the Government to concede American Independence and put an end to the war. This attempt aroused Lord Chatham, who was growing very feeble, and he came down to the House of Lords in order to give voice to his indignation :

"Shall a people," he cried,²¹ "that seventeen years ago was the terror of the world, now stoop so low as to tell its ancient, inveterate enemy—'Take all we have : only give us Peace !' It is impossible . . . let us at least make one effort, and, if we must fall, let us fall like men !" So spoke the old lion, but Chatham's

last effort proved too much for his enfeebled strength, and he collapsed in the House: "Lord Chatham," Burke informed ²² Richard Champion, "fell upon the bosom of the Duke of Portland in an apoplectick fit, after he had spit his last Venom." Chatham lingered for a month, and at his funeral in Westminster Abbey Burke acted as a pall-bearer. Burke's vindictiveness may possibly have been sharpened by the growing pressure of his pecuniary embarrassments. William Burke had lost the protection of Parliament, although he had unsuccessfully contested Haslemere; judgments for large sums were being entered ²³ in the Courts against him, and against Richard Burke, both of whom were completely insolvent. In the hope of assisting them, Edmund tried ²⁴ during 1776 to secure for himself the lucrative office of City Chamberlain, which had fallen vacant in February. As this place was worth between two thousand five hundred pounds and three thousand pounds a year, Burke would have been amply compensated, if he had been successful, for the loss of his employment as Agent for the Colony of New York. The City Chamberlain's office, which was virtually a sinecure, was commonly regarded at that time as a refuge for the destitute,²⁵ but unhappily this project came to nothing. During the early months of 1777 William was ready to fly the country at a moment's notice, but he did not actually leave until June. He departed for India with a letter from Lord Rockingham to Lord Pigot after Edmund had parted with the last monied stake which he possessed in the world in order to assist him.²⁶ When William reached Madras he found that Pigot was dead, and that he possessed nothing in the world except a letter of introduction in his pocket from Edmund Burke to Philip Francis. In this letter Edmund hopefully adjured ²⁷ Francis: "Let Bengal

protect a spirit and rectitude which is no longer tolerated in England." Francis expressed astonishment at William's arrival in so forlorn a condition. He could hold out no prospect of employment, but he offered his home as a refuge. William, fortunately, had no need to accept Francis's charity ; he obtained a post as Agent in London to the Rajah, or as Edmund preferred to call him, the King of Tanjore, and he returned to England with uncommon rapidity.

In the meantime Burke's constituents at Bristol were beginning to show signs of impatience at the independent line which he was pursuing in Parliament. Burke insisted, with the picture of his own family in his mind, in supporting a Bill for the relief of insolvent debtors which the merchants of Bristol resented as being detrimental to their interests. Burke also insisted, against the short-sighted opposition of most of the leading merchants of Bristol, in supporting certain measures for the relief of Irish trade which Lord North, on behalf of the Government, introduced into the House of Commons in the summer of 1778. Burke admitted ²⁸ that in supporting these proposals he was acting against the wishes of his constituents, and he said that if they were to reject him at the next election he should not blame them ; he would be content to offer himself as a useful example of a senator holding inflexibly to what he believed to be right against the seductions of interest and popularity. Burke's support was of no immediate practical value, for North's proposals aroused so much selfish opposition that they had to be withdrawn. However, in the following year, at a time when the war was going badly for England, a substantial measure of concession was wrung from the Government's hands. A body of " Volunteers " sprang up in Ireland, representing every section of popular opinion ; under pressure



William Burke

BURKE'S ZEAL FOR IRISH LIBERTIES

from these armed patriots not only were some of the worst provisions of the Penal Code against Catholics repealed, but an Act was passed permitting the free export of Irish manufactured wool and glass. In 1780, under the same pressure, Protestant Dissenters in Ireland were made eligible for public office. Burke was overjoyed at these developments which he laboured, with all his might, to promote. For his services to Irish commerce he was voted ²⁹ the Freedom of Londonderry ; for his services to the Catholics he was asked to accept a present of money from the Irish Catholic Committee. Burke refused ³⁰ the money, and he refused likewise to countenance a proposition which had been mooted to set up a statue to him in Dublin. Such honours, he said, belonged exclusively to the tomb. Burke's support of the Catholic cause was at all times open and undisguised, but it was known that at this period he was working furiously behind the scenes as well to secure their interests. This knowledge provided Burke's constituents at Bristol with a further grievance against him, and it made his name so suspect to the fanatical mood of the London mob, that his life was seriously endangered during the Anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of June, 1780.

On July 27th, 1778, an indecisive naval engagement off Ushant, in the Channel, had important political consequences. A dispute arose between Admiral Keppel, who commanded the Fleet, and Sir Hugh Palliser, his third in command. Both men were Members of Parliament, but Keppel followed Rockingham while Palliser belonged to the Court Party. The quarrel therefore became political, and it was soon so highly inflamed that it engaged the attention of the whole nation. It was whispered that Palliser, although his courage was not in dispute, had ignored an order from Keppel to advance

and so caused the action to be broken off without a victory. The Court and Ministers, however, made no secret of their support of Palliser. Keppel had irritated his Sovereign by complaining of the bad state of the Fleet, and by refusing to accept any command which would have involved him in fighting against the Americans. It was generally supposed that Palliser would have asked to be court-martialled in order to clear his honour, and when it became known that he had, instead, exhibited five capital charges of disgraceful conduct in face of the enemy against Keppel there was widespread consternation. Palliser was egged on by Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and when it became clear that Keppel was being made the object of a vindictive prosecution on the part of the Court and at the instance of one of his subordinates, public opinion rallied to his side. His trial opened at Portsmouth on January 7th, 1779, and it was attended by all the leaders of the Rockingham Party. Every day which passed seemed to heap fresh glory on the prisoner, but the fate of Admiral Byng was in everybody's mind, and Burke laboured night and day for the defence. Byng had been unjustly shot as a scapegoat in 1756, after the loss of Minorca, and Keppel had been the junior member of the court-martial which condemned him. On February 11th, Keppel was triumphantly acquitted ; the charges were declared to have been malicious and ill-founded, and London was illuminated as soon as the news was known. The Rockingham Party, condemned so long to an inglorious opposition, felt that it had at last won a great victory ; it was everywhere recognized that Keppel's acquittal implied the condemnation of the Government. Some young bloods, including Charles Fox, Lord Derby and the Duke of Ancaster, forced the gates of the Admiralty and chased Lord Sandwich, who

fled in terror with his mistress, through the gardens into the Horse Guards. Palliser's house in Pall Mall was sacked, and there was widespread jubilation. Keppel was accorded the Freedom of the City and even the Thanks of Parliament ; bonfires blazed in his honour ; public houses adopted his name as their sign.

The expenses of the war were beginning to give rise to a widespread demand for economy, and the Opposition seized at once upon this demand. Burke said ³¹ that the corrupt influence of the Court, after first affecting only the higher orders of the State, had at last penetrated into every creek and cranny of the Kingdom ; the best means of striking at it was obviously to make the best use possible of the new public call for economy. Associations demanding economy and a measure of Parliamentary Reform sprang up all over the country, and Petitions poured in to Westminster. The motive for these demands was not democratic, but rather a desire to restore efficient government by placing the Crown and Parliament under some sort of control by public opinion. Burke for his part strongly disassociated ³² himself from any desire to alter the existing system of Parliamentary election or representation, but Fox gaily advocated annual Parliaments, while his uncle, the Duke of Richmond, declared himself in favour of manhood suffrage. The fissure which was later to split the Whigs was already beginning to disclose itself.

Throughout the year 1779 the word "economy" seemed to captivate the nation, and Burke, when he rose on February 11th, 1780, to propose his Plan of Economic Reform, took advantage of a magnificent opportunity. Burke's Plan embraced the reform of the King's Household ; the suppression of a great many useless offices including all subordinate Treasuries ; the sale of most of the Crown Lands ; a reform of the Pension List, and of

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various Government Departments ; and the abolition of the separate Jurisdictions of Wales, Lancaster, Chester and Cornwall. Burke poured ridicule ³³ upon the anomalies inherent in those ancient Jurisdictions :

“ Cross a brook, and you lose the King of England ; but you have some comfort in coming again under His Majesty, though shorn of his beams and no more than Prince of Wales. Go to the North, and you find him dwindled to a Duke of Lancaster ; turn to the West of that North, and he pops upon you in the humble character of Earl of Chester. Travel a few miles on, the Earl of Chester disappears, and the King surprises you again as Count Palatine of Lancaster. If you travel beyond Mount Edgecombe, you find him once more in his incognito, and he is Duke of Cornwall. So that, quite fatigued and satiated with this dull variety, you are infinitely refreshed when you return to the sphere of his proper splendor, and behold your amiable Sovereign in his true, simple, undisguised, native character of Majesty.”

Burke complained that every one of these separate jurisdictions was provided with the apparatus of a kingdom, and the charge of an Exchequer of Great Britain. He submitted that they were all kept in being solely for the purpose of multiplying offices and extending influence. A recent attempt to assimilate the local corruption of Wales to the general body of English corruption had produced remarkable results : “ Snowdon shook to its base ; Cader-Idris was loosened from its foundations. The fury of litigious war blew her horn on the mountains. The rocks poured down their goat-herds, and the deep caverns vomited out their miners. Everything above ground and everything under ground was in arms.” ³⁴ The Royal Household nourished some

remarkable abuses : “ Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There the bleak winds, there Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud, howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guardrooms, appall the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane,—the stern Edwards and fierce Henrys who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. . . . These palaces are a true emblem of some Governments : the inhabitants are decayed, but the governors and magistrates still flourish. They put me in mind of Old Sarum, where the Representatives, more in number than the Constituents, only serve to inform us that this was once a place of trade, and sounding with the busy hum of men, though now you can only trace the streets by the color of the corn, and its sole manufacture is in Members of Parliament.” ³⁵

Burke declined to propose the abolition of those great sinecure offices of the Exchequer which had been treated as property and made the subject of family settlements. He hoped gradually to be able to reduce these to fixed salaries, but he said that he would treat as sacred that which the law respected. He said further that he would not touch any of the great Offices of Honour immediately about the King’s person, on the ground that kings are naturally lovers of low company, and that it is better for them to be surrounded by men of birth and education, than by Italian eunuchs, mountebanks, fiddlers and pimps. This great speech made a tremendous impression upon the House of Commons and Burke was heard with delight from beginning to end. Even Edward Gibbon who, as a Lord Commissioner of the Board of Trade, enjoyed a sinecure salary of eight

hundred pounds a year, testified ³⁶ to the great effect which Burke on this occasion produced. One member rose to protest against the proposed abolition of the Board of Trade, and pointed out that works like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* were being produced there. Burke made great play with this protest. As an Academy of Belles Lettres, he said ³⁷ he revered the Board : as a Board of Trade he held it to be useless, idle and expensive. He compared it amongst other things to a crow's nest in which nightingales are imprisoned. He meant to take down the nest and liberate the nightingales, so that they might sing more delightfully in freedom. Burke's schemes of economy, which might have saved the country a very large annual expenditure, were abolished piecemeal in committee. The only project which was carried was that for the abolition of the Board of Trade.

CHAPTER SIX

Office

THE Government's unpopularity increased steadily throughout the early months of 1780, and in April the House of Commons resolved by 233 votes to 215 that "The influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." In June occurred the terrible outbreak of the Gordon Riots, which afforded a momentary insight into the ferment of tumultuous hatreds, black ignorance and licentiousness which was swirling beneath the smooth surface of everyday life. The rioters were inflamed in the first instance by anti-Papist prejudice which still at that time formed part of the normal political psychology of Englishmen. The fanaticism of the mob had been excited by recent pro-Catholic legislation ; it was deliberately fanned and exploited now by Lord George Gordon, an hysterical Member of Parliament and mischief-maker. A Petition praying for the repeal of the recent legislation affecting Catholics was signed by nearly 120,000 people, and on June 2nd, 1780, Gordon led some 60,000 marchers from St. George's Fields to Westminster in order to present the Petition to Parliament. In haranguing a section of this huge mob, Gordon denounced Burke for his Catholic sympathies and associations. Rioting broke out at once, and continued for ten days ; by June 5th it had become evident that an unprecedented situation of extreme gravity had arisen. The dregs of the populace were completely out of control, and in the absence of any

efficient body of police they appeared to hold London at their mercy. Burke and the Duke of Richmond were the two men whose lives were most openly threatened,¹ but whereas Richmond left town in disgust, Burke refused² all his friends' entreaties to go into the country. A garrison of sixteen soldiers was sent to protect his house in Charles Street, St. James's Square, but Burke chose to dismiss them, after sending his furniture, books and papers to a place of safety. He himself and his wife accepted the hospitality of General Burgoyne, who was home on parole, after surrendering to the Americans at Saratoga. Burke implored Lord North, whom he saw frequently while the riots continued, not to submit to violence on the Catholic issue, and he demanded that London should be placed under martial law. As the riots approached their climax there were scenes of indescribable confusion. Houses, chapels, shops and prisons were sacked, and whole districts were given over to fire, pillage and debauchery. Before order was finally restored some hundreds of lives were lost, but Burke at once appealed for moderation in the treatment of all those who had been arrested. He argued that mass executions were very liable to defeat their object, and that the best way to inspire terror was to make a solemn example of one man. In all no more than twenty-one rioters were executed.

In September, 1780, Parliament was dissolved; the Government hoped to take advantage of the mass of floating opinion which the riots had rallied to its side. Burke went down to Bristol and found that he had to answer charges there of having neglected his constituents by never visiting the City, and of having acted in a manner contrary to his constituents' wishes in the matter of Imprisonment for Debt, Irish Trade and Catholic Relief. Burke defended himself as best he could on all

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four counts ; he pleaded that by never visiting Bristol he had had all the more time to devote to forwarding his constituents' interests in London. Burke did not visit his constituency once between August, 1776, and September, 1780, and in his position this neglect was inexcusable. He was sitting as a Whig for a seat which was traditionally Tory : moreover, in several matters he was well aware that his conduct had aroused dissatisfaction in Bristol. He rebuked his constituents now for their selfishness and intolerance, telling them, amongst much else, that his attitude towards Ireland had been based on the same principles as his attitude towards America ; he added ³ that he had felt every gazette of triumph from across the Atlantic as a blow upon his heart. Burke's eloquence failed to convince the electors, and when he saw that defeat was inevitable he renounced his candidature ; he wrote ⁴ privately to Portland to explain the situation, and he asked that the Party should defray a sum of one thousand pounds which he had disbursed towards his election expenses. Burke's Speech on Declining the Poll on September 9th, 1780, was quite in his best manner ; it was lucid, dignified and brief. One of his Tory opponents, Coombe, had collapsed and died on the previous day, and Burke commented ⁵ :

“ Gentlemen, the melancholy event of yesterday reads to us an awful lesson against being too much troubled about any of the objects of ordinary ambition. The worthy gentleman who has been snatched from us at the moment of the election, and in the middle of the contest, whilst his desires were as warm and his hopes as eager as ours, has feelingly told us what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.”

To Lady Rockingham he opened ⁶ his heart a little more

freely, confessing how bitterly he hated Cruger, his fellow-member, and how ill-suited he himself was to woo a popular constituency like Bristol: "I am sick, very sick, but in two minutes I must become one of the jolliest fellows in the world. They *expect* something of the kind here." Burke detested Cruger partly on personal grounds, and partly because Cruger belonged to that section of the Party which Burke called the "corps of schemers" who were indulging themselves with political speculations. In Burke's view⁷ the bane of the Whigs was the new tendency on the part of men like Fox and Richmond to advocate far-reaching reforms in the system of Parliamentary Representation. Burke was convinced that the existing system which had grown out of the experience of centuries was far more efficient for all practical purposes than anything which could be devised by political visionaries imbued with the enervating atmosphere of the Paris salons. He told Lady Rockingham, after his rejection, that he regarded all schemes for the reform of Parliament as pure buffoonery. The people were never to be depended upon in any difficult question, and no amount of reform could be expected to alter their character. Burke was consistent throughout his life in his view of this matter, but men's outlook, during the century which followed his death, became radically changed. During the eighteenth century the electors themselves were far more corrupt and irresponsible than the members whom they elected, and the contempt which Burke felt for all democratic theory was fully justified by the venality and appalling ignorance of the average voter. The liberal democratic experiment of the nineteenth century could never have been attempted until after the face of England had been transformed by the processes of the new Industrial Age. Modern democracy differs from its ancient prototypes in

that it is not founded upon slave labour ; it embraces the masses, and is not confined merely to the few. Such a conception of democracy could never have arisen before the Industrial Revolution had made possible the accumulation of sufficient capital in wealth and leisure for the masses to be initiated into a constantly expanding measure of elementary education and material well-being. Any development of this kind must have appeared utterly fantastic to such a child of the eighteenth century as Burke, and he therefore repudiated the theory of democracy as an unpleasant, misshapen monster fathered by visionary politicians out of French metaphysics.

Burke felt sore at his rejection for Bristol, and he told ⁸ Portland that he would be glad to retire from public life but for the certainty that the news would kill William Burke. He said that William had founded all his hopes of success in India on the consequence which he was supposed to derive from his friend being in some sort of public employment. Rockingham arranged for Burke to be elected again at Malton, and as soon as the election was over, Edmund began to draft protests against the treatment accorded to William's employer, the Rajah of Tanjore. As a result of Burke's efforts William was able to leave England with a letter from the Prime Minister in his pocket, in which North promised that the Rajah's complaints should at least be made the subject of official enquiries. From this time Edmund's imagination became increasingly concerned with the Indian problem in all its ramifications, but most particularly with the actions of the small group of men whom he regarded as responsible formerly for William's financial downfall, and latterly for the oppression of William's employer.

Another matter which engaged Burke's attention for

a time was the affair of Admiral Rodney and the Dutch West Indian Island of St. Eustatius. When war began with Holland in December, 1780, Rodney was ordered to seize St. Eustatius ; his method of doing so gave rise to a controversy into which Burke flung himself with passion. The island of St. Eustatius has arisen, as Burke said, like another Tyre upon the waves, to communicate to the whole of the West Indies the necessities and conveniences of life. Life in the West Indies was always precarious during the eighteenth century ; under war conditions it would have become impossible unless some central emporium had existed where the necessities of life could be obtained by all. The neutral island of St. Eustatius had accordingly, as a result of the war, become suddenly a place of first-class commercial importance. Its wealth was immense ; the rents of its dwellings and warehouses soared to prodigious heights ; adventurers were attracted to it from all parts of the world, and the nationals of all the neutral and warring States traded there as in a time of peace. When Rodney arrived off the island in February, 1781, the Dutch Governor was still ignorant of the fact that war had been declared. He had no choice but to surrender, and Rodney, who regarded the place as a nest of villains who had grown rich by trading in contraband with their countries' enemies, resolved to show no mercy. Disregarding every principle of international law, he decreed the confiscation of all property, private as well as public, in the island. The total spoils amounted to about four million pounds, and some of the Jews of St. Eustatius, who showed a disposition to argue, were roughly handled. Burke protested in the House of Commons against the ill-treatment of the Jews ; he said that it ought to be the especial care of all humane nations to protect them. There is no doubt that Rodney

was tempted to act unjustly through the lure of riches, and in later years, after he had retired with a peerage, he was harassed by a number of suits for illegal spoliation.

Burke's inexhaustible fund of humanity was employed at this time in the service of others besides the inhabitants of St. Eustatius. On April 11th, 1780, he called ⁹ the attention of the House of Commons to the fate of two wretches who had been convicted of sodomy, and sentenced to stand in the pillory before being imprisoned. Both men had been pelted to death by an infuriated mob as the pillory revolved. Burke constantly used ¹⁰ his best efforts to prevent the pillory from being ordered in cases of sodomy, and his zeal on behalf of such offenders was eagerly seized upon and represented in a sinister light. Certain newspapers took up the cry, and four years later Burke was compelled to bring an action for libel against Henry Woodfall, the printer of the *Public Advertiser*. Another notable instance of Burke's unhesitating and uncalculating kindness occurred early in 1781, when he received ¹¹ a letter from an unknown correspondent who signed himself George Crabbe. The poet, who was then aged twenty-seven, related a pitiful tale of poverty and loneliness which ended with a threat to commit suicide on the spot unless Burke should receive him when he called. Burke, who may have remembered the dreadful fate of Chatterton in Bristol less than eleven years before, immediately invited Crabbe to see him. He read his poems, told him he was a genius with a tremendous future, gave him food and money, and invited him to Beaconsfield for as long as he cared to stay. Burke's kindness to Crabbe makes one of the most pleasant episodes in English literature: it was Burke who persuaded Dodsley to publish Crabbe's poem "The Library": it was Burke who entertained Crabbe at Beaconsfield for the whole of the time during which

he was writing "The Village." Burke induced the Bishop of Norwich to admit the poet to Holy Orders, despite his lack of any regular qualification, and he introduced him to Reynolds, Johnson and Thurlow—the Lord Chancellor. Burke persuaded the Duke of Rutland to make Crabbe his chaplain, and precarious as his own circumstances were he invariably acted with the same reckless generosity whenever he was confronted with the spectacle of want or unhappiness in others. Crabbe told Burke that he had previously applied to Shelburne, North and Thurlow, but that they had ignored his appeals.

In the Autumn of 1781 the war in America was brought to an end by the surrender of Cornwallis to Washington at Yorktown in Virginia. The news reached England at the end of November, but its full effect upon the minds of Ministers was not immediately apparent. Five months had still to pass before King George would accept the inevitable and permit Lord North to resign, and during the whole of this period Fox and Burke assailed the Government with a torrent of argument, invective and satire which was quite unanswerable. On February 29th, 1782, a motion for putting an end to the American War was carried in the House of Commons by 234 votes to 215. Even so, King George delayed, and it was not until March 20th, after several more votes had been taken in the House, that North announced the resignation of his Government. Before making his announcement North had privately arranged for the House to adjourn early; it was a bitterly cold night, and as he passed the shivering ranks of excited members who were all waiting for their coaches, he sprang lightly into his own, exclaiming: "Good night, gentlemen; you see what it is to be in the secret." So ended George III's ill-fated experiment

LORD NORTH RESIGNS

in personal rule. By the King's command Thurlow approached Rockingham about the formation of a new government, and was informed that Rockingham's terms comprised a policy of peace abroad and economy in all departments at home. After an unsuccessful approach to the Bedford group, the King sent for Shelburne and invited him to form a government with Rockingham. The King hated the Rockingham Whigs so much that at one time he threatened to abdicate and retire to Hanover rather than fall into their hands. He absolutely declined to see Rockingham until after the new government had been formed. Rockingham was mortified by this treatment, and doubtful of the course which he ought to pursue. However, after a meeting of his friends had promised him their unreserved support, Rockingham consented to negotiate through Shelburne. Burke's extraordinary modesty was shown in a memorandum¹² which he drew up while these negotiations were in progress and presented to Rockingham. He told Rockingham to pay regard only to rank and consideration: "Take no thought," he said, "of anything further for me." He was quite willing to resign, if necessary, even his claim to the office of Paymaster-General, and he asked in that case only that some provision might be made for his son: "I can readily consent to lie by, but having second-rate pretensions, not to be placed below others in that line." In the House of Commons on March 20th, 1782, General Conway congratulated Burke upon his prospect of achieving Cabinet rank at last. God knew, Burke replied,¹³ that he had no such idea; he possessed no claim to it from rank, or from fortune, or even from ambition. He was not a man so foolishly vain, or so blindly ignorant of his condition as to entertain for a moment an ambition to enter the Cabinet.

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the sentiment which Burke expressed at this critical moment of his career. He was moved partly by an inferiority complex which he never overcame, but mainly by a deep instinct which warned him that he was temperamentally unfitted for high office. Burke's feeling of inferiority, which was due to his middle-class Irish origin, was aggravated continually by the financial stresses under which he laboured. Even at the end of his life this feeling remained, and it was sometimes exaggerated to the point of absurdity. On March 11th, 1795, Burke wrote ¹⁴ to the Duke of Devonshire to urge that the House of Lords should present a united front of opposition to the democratic idea: "In such company I do not know how I should intrude such a crawling existence on earth as I am . . . I am an Aristocrat in Principle. In Situation, God knows, nothing less." This grovelling by a statesman of Burke's calibre seemed to caricature the hierarchic social conventions of the eighteenth century, and in the face of it it was not easy always to treat Burke as an equal. He began life at much the same level as Charles Jenkinson, who became an under-secretary in 1761 and who, after achieving Cabinet rank, died as first Earl of Liverpool, leaving a son who became Prime Minister. It may be said with confidence that it was not aristocratic prejudice which prevented Burke from doing the same. Burke's reverence for the principle of aristocracy was so intimately bound up with his whole scheme of political thought that it would be superficial to dismiss it as mere snobbery. He sincerely believed that government by the aristocracy was in manifest accordance with the will of God, and he possessed sufficient strength of character to understand that Nature which had failed to create him an aristocrat had not even designed him for a man of action. In

these circumstances he was prepared to admit that he was unfitted, owing to his lack of both natural and artificial qualifications, for the responsibilities of Cabinet office.

Rockingham assumed power for the second time in seventeen years on March 24th, 1782. He had as his Secretaries of State Shelburne—to whom the King gave all his confidence—and Fox. Burke and Shelburne were never cordial and Burke shared to the full ¹⁵ the acid distrust which Shelburne's character inspired. Though the Government did not look as though it could last long the Burkes were all well placed for the moment, and hugely delighted. Edmund became a Privy Councillor and Paymaster-General with an official residence and an annual salary of four thousand pounds. Burke's son, Richard, and Burke's friend, Richard Champion,¹⁶ became Joint Deputy-Paymasters at salaries of five hundred a year each. Richard Burke the elder who was making no headway at the Bar was appointed Secretary to the Treasury at a salary of three thousand pounds, and William Burke was appointed ¹⁷ Deputy-Paymaster to Edmund in India with an allowance of five pounds a day. This last appointment evoked some criticism, since it wore all the appearance of a "job," but William, whose warrant was dated May 24th, 1782, retained his employment for ten years. Even Juliana French, Edmund's Roman Catholic sister, was not forgotten in the general scramble, and Portland, the new Viceroy of Ireland, endeavoured to arrange ¹⁸ a little pension for her as a modest token of the Ministerial goodwill.

One of Burke's first acts on taking office was to institute a thorough-going reform of his Department ; his main object was to prevent, for the future, the accumulation of any large balances in the hands of the

Paymaster. Rigby, the manager of the Bedford Whigs, and Henry Holland, the father of Charles Fox, had both made enormous fortunes out of their tenure of the Pay Office, but Burke followed Chatham in renouncing for himself any idea of emulating their example. Burke not only imitated Chatham in declining to profit from the interest on the balances ; he determined to put it out of the power of any of his successors in office ever to do again as Holland and Rigby had done. Unfortunately Burke stage-managed his reform with great imprudence, for he carried it through with the aid of two former departmental officials whose services had been suspended by his predecessor for an alleged embezzlement of public funds. On May 21st, 1782, Burke told ¹⁹ the House of Commons that the Pay Office had formerly been worth about twenty-seven thousand pounds a year to its head, whereas, under the new regulations, it was worth exactly four thousand. Burke certainly deserved credit for the disinterestedness and public spirit which he evinced in instituting this reform.

The most important act of the second Rockingham Administration was the recognition of Irish Parliamentary independence, and Burke expressed ²⁰ his intense satisfaction in the House of Commons on May 17th, 1782. He had always, he declared, said to himself that if such an insignificant person as he was should ever be so fortunate as to perform an essential service, so that his Sovereign or Parliament became desirous to reward him, he would say : " Do something for Ireland ! Do something for my people, and I shall be over-rewarded ! " Burke spoke, at the same time, of his desire to do something for the peoples of India whom he could never hope to know at first hand. It was an England worn out by the long struggle with America, and semi-educated in the rudiments of the new imperial grammar

by Edmund Burke, which allowed the concession of Irish Parliamentary independence to pass. Burke regarded ²¹ the Irish " Revolution " of 1782 as the true complement of the English Revolution of 1688, but there were two major stumbling-blocks ahead, neither of which was destined to be removed during Burke's life-time. In the first place the corruption of Irish politics and public life was so great that it was easy for the Viceroy and the Junta at Dublin Castle to " manage " the situation on behalf of English interests ; in the second place the great Catholic majority of the inhabitants of Ireland was still denied any share in the Government or Public Service of the country.

In May, 1782, the welcome news reached England of a naval victory in the West Indies. The " Battle of the Saints " restored to England the command of the seas, and the French admiral himself was made a prisoner in his flagship. The victorious British commander was Admiral Rodney of St. Eustatius, whom the Rockingham Whigs had already decided to recall ; a messenger was actually on his way to the West Indies with the summons when the news arrived. Burke announced at once that he proposed to drop the enquiry into the affair of St. Eustatius, and he said ²² that if Rodney had a bald patch on his head he would be proud to cover it with a crown of laurel. It was too late to cancel the message of recall, but the King signified his intention of making Rodney a Peer, and Parliament resolved that any financial provision which might appear desirable should be made for him.

The Plan of Economic Reform which was introduced into the House of Commons by Burke was the second important act of the second Rockingham Administration. Owing to the opposition which had been aroused it was far less comprehensive than its predecessor, but even

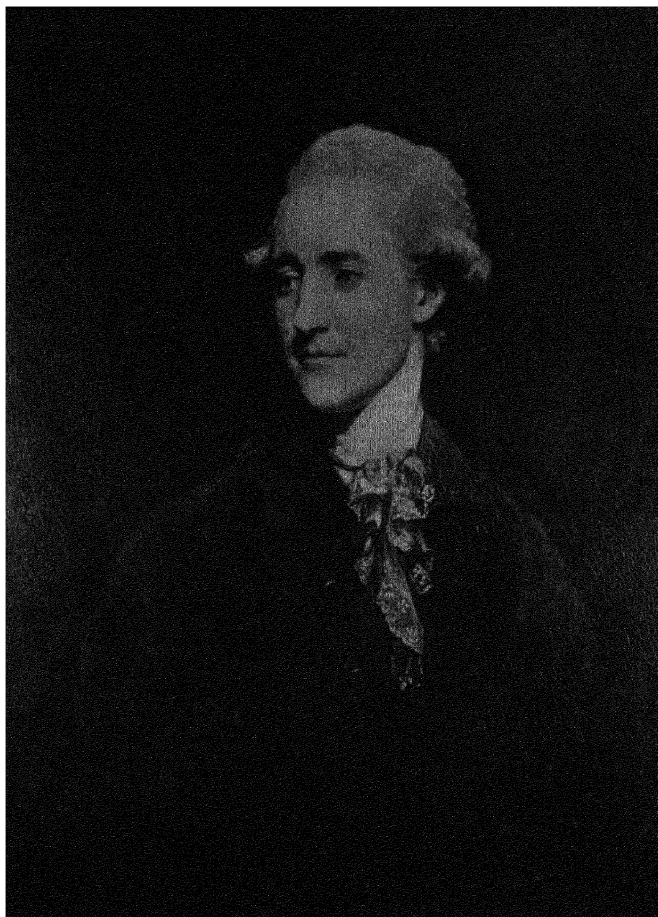
in the emasculated form in which it reached the Statue Book it left a permanent impression for good upon the public life of England. Burke's economies were effected chiefly through the abolition of more than forty ²³ valuable offices which had usually been held by Members of Parliament, and separate Acts were passed to disfranchise Government Contractors and Revenue Officers. By these means the Government's patronage in sinecures and places was substantially reduced, and it was rendered certain that no one would ever again be in a position to bribe Parliament wholesale as Walpole, the Pelhams and George III had done. "The Augean Stables were half swept out." ²⁴ In May, 1782, all records relating to the incapacity of Wilkes to represent Middlesex were formally expunged from the Journals of the House of Commons as subversive of the rights of the whole body of the electors. In this way a struggle which had lasted for thirteen years was terminated with the minimum of excitement.

The strain of office proved too much for Rockingham's enfeebled frame ; he sank visibly beneath it, and on July 1st, 1782, barely three months after coming into power, he died from influenza. On personal and other grounds the death of Rockingham was the most severe blow which Burke had yet been called upon to face. Politically Rockingham had been completely dominated by Burke, and Burke had borrowed enormous sums of money from Rockingham which he had no prospect of ever being able to repay. Rockingham's heir was his nephew, Lord Fitzwilliam, who wrote ²⁵ to Burke two days after his uncle's death to tell him that Rockingham had by Will forgiven him all his debts : "He felt merit as he ought to have done, and he never did an action in his life more acceptable to your sincere friend—Fitzwilliam." This was a handsome note, and the

ROCKINGHAM DIES FROM 'FLU'

relations between Burke and Fitzwilliam became in time as close in every respect as those which had formerly existed between Burke and Rockingham. It was a hereditary relation on both sides, for Edmund's son, Richard, who was a failure at the Bar, became the manager of Fitzwilliam's legal affairs. Nevertheless Burke did not, just at first, care to receive from Fitzwilliam, who was his junior in age by twenty years, the financial assistance to which he had grown accustomed from Rockingham, and his embarrassments accumulated accordingly, until they affected even his sanguine temperament. The tone of Burke's utterances in public became increasingly vitriolic after Rockingham's death, and this was largely the reason why he began to lose his hold upon the attention of the House of Commons. Within a week of Rockingham's death Burke made two determined attempts to establish his financial affairs upon a firmer foundation. A warrant was made out ²⁶ on July 5th, 1782, appointing Richard Burke, junior, and Edmund's young friend and assistant, Walker King, jointly in survivorship to the sinecure office of Receiver-General of the Land Revenues of Essex, Hertford, Middlesex, Norfolk, Huntingdon and the City of London. The warrant was not executed that year, owing to the change of government which followed Rockingham's death, but a year later, when Burke had returned to the Pay Office under the shameful Fox-North Coalition, it went through ²⁷ without a hitch. On July 7th, 1782, Burke made a more ambitious attempt to secure for his son the famous Clerkship of the Pells—the second most valuable sinecure in the Exchequer. The value of this office was liable to fluctuate considerably, but while the American War was in progress it had been worth as much as seven thousand pounds a year. The Clerk of the Pells at this time was Sir Edward

Walpole, an old man with whom Burke had no acquaintance ; he called ²⁸ therefore upon Horace Walpole, Sir Edward's brother, in order to explain his proposition. Edmund suggested that Sir Edward Walpole should resign his clerkship to young Richard Burke in return for certain complicated guarantees and indemnities. When Horace Walpole saw the whole scheme set down in writing,²⁹ he characterized it with good reason as "frantic." It was virtually certain that Sir Edward would refuse, and Horace Walpole's comments were sulphurous. He was particularly impressed by a chance observation of Richard Burke that his father had always intended to get hold of the Clerkship of the Pells : "Can one but smile," Walpole noted in his *Journal*, "at the reformer of abuses reserving the second greatest abuse for himself." Burke's proposal was extremely injudicious, but it was not so utterly indefensible as Walpole's smug comment might seem to imply. Burke had gone out of his way, at the time when he first introduced his scheme of Economic Reform, to say that he accepted the system whereby genuine merit was rewarded by the conferment of sinecures and pensions ; he was concerned only to put a stop to the abuse of such awards for corrupt purposes. Nevertheless, Burke's action in trying to get hold of the Clerkship of the Pells was not quite in harmony with his action in renouncing the customary emoluments of the Pay Office. He ought not to have afforded any possible grounds for suspicion in regard to the sincerity of his motives at a time when he was publicly playing the role of moralist and reformer. Burke's imprudence on this occasion was the measure of the desperate financial straits in which he found himself, and those in their turn made the price which he was constrained to pay for his hours of happiness and recreation at Beaconsfield.



Richard Burke
(*Edmund's son*)

Even before Rockingham died the political and personal feud which sprang up between Fox and Burke on the one hand and Shelburne on the other had threatened the Ministry with disaster. So far as Fox was concerned the issue was mainly personal, but for Burke it was more a question of principle. Lord Shelburne was immensely rich, but extraordinarily unpopular ; he lived like a prince in his two sumptuous palaces of Bowood and Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, but he was universally distrusted and known as "Malagrida," or "The Jesuit of Berkeley Square." All his life a legend of duplicity surrounded his name. The main differences which had arisen between Fox and Shelburne in the Cabinet were concerned with American and Indian policy. Shelburne held ³⁰ that Fox and Burke had encouraged the Americans by their rash speeches at a time when it might still have been possible to crush the rebellion ; he was, furthermore, inflexibly opposed ³¹ to any idea of bringing to justice those who were accused of having acted tyrannically in India. Shelburne had irritated the whole body of the Rockingham Party by expressing contempt for Burke's Bill for Economic Reform ; he had at the same time exasperated Burke beyond measure by his zeal for the Reform of Parliament. When William Pitt introduced a motion upon this subject in May, 1782, Burke had declared ³² :

"I look with filial reverence on the Constitution of my Country, and never will cut it in pieces and put into the kettle of any magician in order to boil it with the puddle of their compounds into youth and vigour. On the contrary I will drive away such pretenders ; I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath."

When Rockingham died the Party met and elected

Portland as his successor. But neither Shelburne, nor the King, saw any reason for taking notice of this election. Shelburne followed Chatham in confounding Party with faction ; he believed in “ measures not men,” and held that the King was free to choose whomsoever he pleased. The King did not hesitate : he ignored Portland, and offered the Treasury to Shelburne, who accepted it at once.

Fox, Burke and several others resigned promptly from the Government. Burke gave his reasons on July 9th, 1782, only eight days after Rockingham’s death, with rather more than his usual extravagance. He said, amidst a considerable outcry, that on financial grounds he was reluctant to quit his office, but that when he contemplated the character of the new Prime Minister he was clear that he had no option. He had found Lord Shelburne’s principles to be those of Machiavelli, while his morals, but for the fact that his intelligence was defective, would be those of a Cataline and a Caesar Borgia. When Burke complained later of the abuse with which he was assailed in Parliament and outside it, he may momentarily have forgotten the fierce language which he himself had so often used about his opponents in the heat and fury of debate.

When Shelburne had reconstituted his Cabinet he was faced with the immediate necessity for liquidating the war. Though England was beaten, she was not crushed : Hastings in India ; Carleton in Canada ; Rodney in the West Indies, and Elliot at Gibraltar had saved the remainder of the Empire overseas. But America was irrevocably lost, and the independence of the United States was formally recognized by the British Government on September 27th, 1782. In his conduct of the peace negotiations Shelburne showed considerable skill, but his administration, which contained a large rump of Rockingham Whigs, showed signs of increased

uneasiness and disruption. At this point occurred one of the most astonishing events in the politics of the eighteenth century: Lord North reached an understanding with Fox and Burke. It was an astounding decision. For years Fox and Burke had strained the resources of the English language in the search for adjectives and insults sufficiently bitter to express their detestation of Lord North and all his works. They had both threatened North with impeachment on account of his American policy, and Burke once went to the length of drawing up formal Articles of Impeachment which Rockingham wisely took from him and persuaded him to forget.³³ And now, with a recklessness, and a contempt for public opinion which characterized Fox all his life, it was announced that Fox and North were prepared to form a Coalition Government on a basis of opposition to the proposed Peace Treaties. The occasion was, if possible, even worse than the event. England had lost the war, which she had provoked by her own folly, but the peace terms, thanks to Shelburne's adroitness, were by no means unsatisfactory. Fox had not been in office many months before he was constrained to accept them, unaltered. The Coalition was a gross and unscrupulous sacrifice of principle for the sake of office, and as such the King and the nation were united in condemning it. Fox's defence of his conduct was greeted with scorn. He said that he had fought North over the American issue until it had ceased to be a live one. He urged that he was incapable of bearing malice: his friendships, he said, were eternal, while his enmities were not. Shelburne's ministry could not survive the junction of Fox and North; on February 24th, 1783, three days after a Motion censuring the proposed Peace Terms had been carried by a majority of seventeen votes in the Commons, Shelburne resigned.

Before the King could bring himself to accept the proposed Coalition Government, a Ministerial interregnum of six weeks intervened. During that time a state of unparalleled confusion reigned. The office of First Lord of the Treasury was offered to one politician after another, but it was refused by all. Weymouth was approached, and Gower, and North, and William Pitt. Pitt actually accepted for a few hours, dazzled, at the age of twenty-three, by the prize which, he had the sense to realize, was not yet quite ready to fall into his lap. The Coalition of Fox and North appeared, indeed, so extraordinary, as to be against nature. King George hated Fox, on many grounds, and not least on account of the friendship which had recently sprung up between Fox and the Prince of Wales. The Prince, who was due to come of age in June, was on no terms with his father ; the King was convinced that Fox was leading the boy to the devil, with wine, women and cards. On personal, therefore, as well as political grounds, the King would have dearly loved to shut out the Rockingham Whigs. Burke did little more than follow Fox when he acquiesced in the Coalition, but he comforted himself with the thought that Shelburne's fall was the necessary preliminary to any action against the government of Hastings in India. The crisis was not ended until April 2nd, 1783, when the King, to his intense dismay, was constrained to accept Portland as First Lord of the Treasury. Fox and North became Secretaries of State, while Edmund and the two Richard Burkes returned to their places at the Pay Office and the Treasury. Three weeks after the new Government assumed Office, Burke launched a violent attack upon Hastings whom he denounced ³⁴ as the Grand Delinquent of all India, and the author of all the unspeakable calamities under which that Empire was groaning. A week later Burke

was even more violent, in his own defence. Upon being reappointed to the Pay Office, he had immediately restored to their posts two suspended officials, Powell and Bembridge, against whom, in the meantime, prosecutions had been ordered for alleged embezzlement. Burke informed none of his colleagues of his action, and when the matter was raised in the House of Commons he became so violently enraged that Fox and Sheridan had to pull him down forcibly into his seat, in order to prevent him from saying anything which it might have been impossible to recall. On May 19th, Burke apologized ³⁵ for his former violence, and defended his action before the House. He said that as both men had been committed to his protection by Almighty God, he was doing no more than his duty in restoring them to their places. Burke embarked upon a lengthy justification of his conduct from his earliest days, and was repeatedly called to order by his fellow Members. With maddening irrelevance, he spoke of the necessity for justifying the order of Providence, which had, he said, committed the fortunes of every clerk in a Government Office to the protection of its political head. He described the motives which had induced him to embark upon his Plan of Economic Reform, and amid a rising chorus of indignant interruptions he dilated upon the assistance which he had received from the two accused Officials. Burke compared his assailants to Red Indian savages, whose custom it was to roast their prisoners alive. He referred, in pathetic language, to the late Marquis of Rockingham, who had, he claimed, gone to a better place. After being again called to order, Burke shifted his ground. He proceeded to tell a story which was so outrageously improper that the House was aghast. He was comparing the degree of vigour required for the task of reforming the Pay Office, with

that which might be demanded, on his bridal night, from an elderly and boastful lover who had married a very beautiful young wife. Burke then proceeded to tell his story, which is unprintable. He used the story in order to show that the Pay Office and the "connubial situation" resembled each other in certain respects: "much duty to be performed, and much strength required." Without the additional vigour which Powell and Bembridge had supplied, it would, Burke explained, have been impossible for him to satisfy the demands which the Pay Office had made upon his strength. This sudden lapse of taste on the part of His Majesty's Paymaster was received in an ominous silence, and Burke finally agreed, in deference to the wishes of the House, to accept the resignations of both officials. Before either case could be tried, Powell, who had acted as confidential clerk to Lord Holland and as the former cashier at the Pay Office, cut his throat. He was reputed to have made a fortune of over a quarter of a million pounds. More than ten years before it had been hinted ³⁶ in the *Public Advertiser* that Powell was engaged in helping the Burkes with their speculative purchase of West Indian lands, and the whole business was most unfortunate for Edmund. Bembridge preferred to face his trial. He was convicted ³⁷ of having connived at the concealment of a sum of nearly forty-nine thousand pounds, and he was sentenced to six months imprisonment, and to a fine of two thousand six hundred and fifty pounds. Burke stood by Bembridge throughout his trial. He was moved partly by motives of humanity; partly by gratitude for the aid which Bembridge had rendered him in reforming the Pay Office; but mainly by his mistakenly generous belief ³⁸ that the Pay Office had formerly been so ill-run that Bembridge had been betrayed into irregular practices. Bembridge was a

friend of Richard Champion, who was on very intimate terms with all the Burkes. Burke was much distressed to discover that Champion, who emigrated to America in 1784, had borrowed large sums of money from Bembridge ; he wrote to Champion to remonstrate with him upon the subject. He pointed out that, if that transaction ever came to light, his enemies, knowing of their intimate friendship, might represent his own conduct in a most sinister light. Burke's humanity was such, nevertheless, that as late as 1791, he addressed³⁹ a compassionate letter to Bembridge, who had begged Burke to intercede for him with Pitt. Burke's handling of this affair damaged his reputation exceedingly ; his weakness and imprudence were a grave embarrassment to the Ministers. Boswell excluded from his *Life of Johnson*, doubtless out of respect for Burke, a characteristic conversation with the Doctor, upon the subject of Powell's suicide :

“ When he talked of Richard Baxter's opinion as to a suicide, I said :

‘ What a shocking instance was this of Powell ! And, sir, I am really uneasy about Burke. They take advantage of this to attack him. Some impute Powell's death to him, from his having restored him and put him into a situation to be driven out.’

‘ Sir,’ said he, ‘ it is no more to be imputed to Burke than to you or me.’

‘ But,’ said I, ‘ they represent him as actually mad ! ’

‘ Sir,’ said he, ‘ if a man will appear extravagant as he does, and cry, can he wonder that he is represented as mad ? ’

“ I said he was unhappy. ‘ Sir,’ said he, ‘ that is the cant of statesmen from age to age.’ . . . ”

Johnson's attitude was robust and bracing, but in fact

OFFICE

Burke's life henceforward was increasingly unhappy. He was already beginning to enter upon what was to prove the most tremendous struggle of his career—the cause of India and the seven years' Trial of Warren Hastings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Cause of India

FROM the far-reaching issues which it involved and the extraordinary interest of the personalities which it engaged, Burke's championship of the cause of India makes one of the most moving and significant chapters in the history of the eighteenth century. Burke himself regarded it as his most enduring title to fame, and he declared ¹ in a solemn testamentary manner at the end of his life that he would be content if everything else which he had said or written were forgotten, so long as his great struggle on behalf of the peoples of India were remembered. In entering upon this struggle Burke's most fundamental motive was less India's need than his own. He was unable to live at all unless he had some tremendous cause outside himself for which to live. As soon as it became clear that America was lost, and that, furthermore, he could never hope to fill one of the highest Offices of State, a void was opened in Burke's life which the cause of India seemed made to satisfy. On New Year's Day, 1782, Mrs. Burke wrote ² to Richard Champion: "Mr. Burke has been full as busy since we came into the country as he was in town. He is trying whether he shall have more success in saving the East than he had in his endeavours for the West. . . . God's will be done."

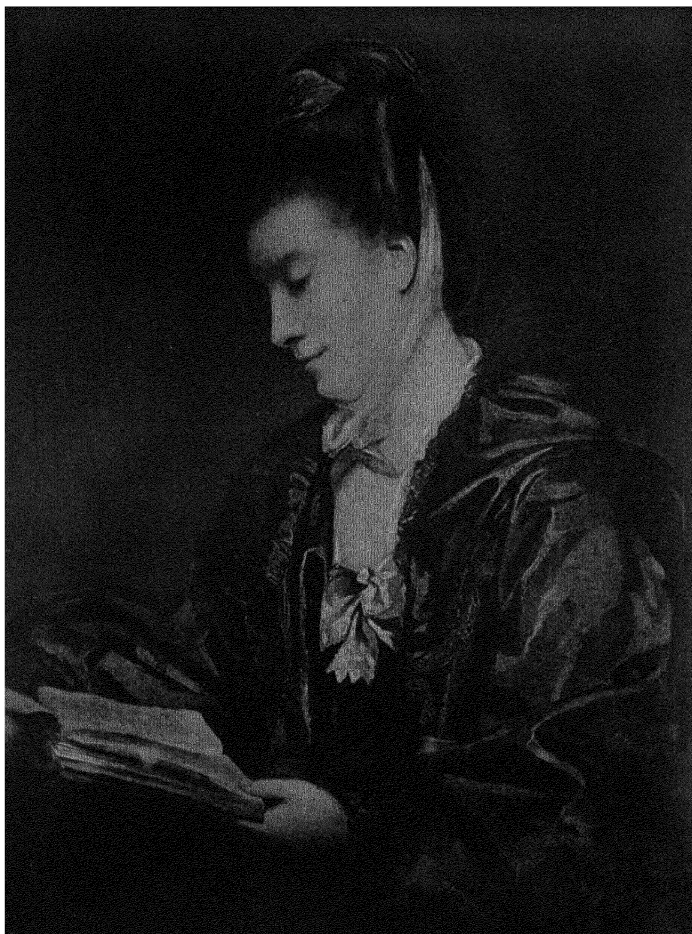
The second motive which turned Burke's thoughts towards India was the failure of William Burke's stock-jobbing operations as a result of that policy of Govern-

ment interference in Indian affairs which had been embodied in the Regulating Act of 1773. It became obvious before many months had passed that the Regulating Act was breaking down badly in practice, and in these circumstances Edmund's indignation quickly became focussed about the heads of those whom it had raised to the supreme power in India. As soon as the Rockingham Whigs had assumed office in April, 1782, Edmund wrote ³ to William with an almost child-like *naïveté* to express his intention of bringing immediately to account the heads of the British Raj in India :

“ Oh ! my dearest, oldest, best friend,—you are far off indeed ! May God, of his infinite mercy, preserve you ! Your enemies,—your cruel and unprovoked persecutors,—are on the ground, suffering the punishment not of their villainy towards you, but of their other crimes, which are innumerable. I think the reign of Sullivan is over ; the reign of Hastings is over. Barwell is within the pinchers ; Whitehill has a Bill filed against him, and is gone out of the Kingdom. But I trust I shall be able to bring him back, or outlaw him by Act of Parliament. Resolutions will pass after the holidays to secure the Rajah of Tanjore.”

Burke wrote ⁴ to Rockingham at the same time to warn him against yielding to Shelburne, and to urge him to proceed at once with the holy work of punishing delinquency in India.

The third motive which drew Burke's mind towards India was also the most apparent : without Francis neither of the other two motives could have become effective. Philip Francis was the villain who, for purposes of his own, deliberately infected Burke's imagination with tales of oppression and woe, and caused Burke to view Hastings as the incarnate spirit of corruption



Mrs. Edmund Burke
(formerly Jane Nugent)

and the author of his country's shame. The story is an amazing one. Burke and Francis were introduced ⁵ by John Bourke, a City merchant who was also Edmund's "kinsman" and intimate friend, some time during 1773. At that time Francis was an obscure War Office clerk, but in *The Letters of Junius* he had found a means of slaking, anonymously, a perverted thirst for power and superiority which hitherto his position in the world had afforded him no opportunity of satisfying. In the year 1774 Francis was sent out to India as one of the councillors of Bengal under the Regulating Act at an annual salary of ten thousand pounds. This was a remarkable appointment, and the circumstances in which it was made have never fully been explained. As soon as he arrived in India Francis began to oppose every move of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, in a spirit of malevolent bitterness which has no parallel in English history. Francis made a particular effort to capture the Opposition at home for his opinions, and on November 30th, 1774, he wrote ⁶ to John Bourke, who forwarded ⁷ a copy of the letter at once to Edmund :

"To what a state think you is the richest country in the world reduced—Bengal was once that country, and Nature intended that it should be so. . . . The corruption is no longer confined to the stem of the tree, or to a few principal branches ; every twig, every leaf is putrified. Obtain a sight of our despatches. Talk to Ned Burke : there must be a vacancy. He is wanted here. . . . I would resign my place to him with joy, or I would act with him, or I would act under him. This is but a hint. I hope it will be pursued and adopted elsewhere. You see it is of a most secret nature. . . . Tell him from me—and as I speak truth from knowledge so may I be honoured with his friendship or blasted

THE CAUSE OF INDIA

with his contempt—that everything he has said of the state of domestic affairs represents a state of innocence, of purity, a refinement of virtue, an excess of integrity bordering upon vice, compared with the condition in which we find the administration of this wretched country.”

Francis understood his man. Edmund was incapable of receiving such a letter in a judicial as well as a compassionate frame of mind. His judgment, like Othello's, was at the mercy of his feelings, and Francis played upon his weaknesses with the dreadful ingenuity of Iago.

Francis had to overcome two main difficulties before Burke succumbed completely to his influence. The first was Burke's faith in the sanctity of chartered rights, which made him most reluctant to contemplate any fresh invasion of the East India Company's privileges : the second was Burke's temperamental distrust for all theoretical opinions. Francis's head was so much swollen with abstract “ metaphysical ” ideas that after the outbreak of the French Revolution Burke and he found themselves in opposite camps. For the present, however, in his dealings with Burke Francis was wise enough to keep this side of his character in the shadows. Francis was by nature an uncompromising theorist, and he carried out with him to India the prejudice of the English people against the wickedness of the East India Company's rule. He was ignorant of Indian conditions, but he had thought out a consistent line of policy from which he never swerved an inch. Francis was convinced that East and West could never meet, and he held that for an Englishman to be a despot was as much against nature as it was for an Indian to be a democrat. He argued that in these circumstances no European could every justly rule over Indians, and he would have liked,

as far as possible, to effect a complete separation between Europeans and Asiatics in the East. Francis argued that Indian institutions had fallen into decay as a result of the interference of the English ; he aimed, accordingly, at restoring the immemorial rule of the native Indian autocrats under the nominal suzerainty of King George. Believing that a system of benevolent native despotism was the highest form of government to which Indians could ever attain, Francis was perpetually seeking for means by which to revive the system that, he supposed, had existed before the English invasions.

Very different was Hastings' view and it was based on twenty-five years' experience of Indian conditions. He saw that the native authority and native institutions were hopelessly decadent, and that they could never be revived ; he was convinced that the English was the only power that could regenerate India. Hastings sought to recognize existing facts ; he studied Indian prejudice and Indian customs with the greatest care in order that they might be reconciled with English dominance. He appreciated the fact that abuses had arisen in the past through the arbitrary exercise of power by the agents of a commercial Company, but he believed that he would be in a position eventually to set everything right, and his confidence was largely justified by subsequent events. Hastings tried to induce the English to study Indian law ; he endeavoured to have it codified, and rigorously enforced. Hastings' whole policy was founded upon experience, and upon a clear understanding of conditions on the spot, whereas the policy of Francis was inspired largely by theory. Had Burke been in Hastings' place as Governor-General at Calcutta, instead of in his seat at Westminster as a leader of the Opposition, it is practically certain that he must have leaned towards the policy of Hastings rather than

towards that of Francis. Had he not so leaned he must have betrayed his own gospel of prudence.

As Burke had foretold, the Regulating Act broke down in practice, and the most important reason was the absence of any discretionary power on the part of the Governor-General to override, in case of need, the vote of the Councillors of State who had been sent out to assist him. In these circumstances the most extraordinary scenes took place between Hastings and Francis in the Supreme Council of Bengal ; the Administration was threatened with paralysis, and few men other than Hastings could have endured the strain. Between the Central Government at Calcutta and the subordinate Presidencies at Madras and Bombay, there was a great lack of harmony, since no tradition of loyalty to the Central Government had yet been built up. The relation of the Supreme Court of Justice to the Supreme Council of Bengal had never been decided in principle, and it was even uncertain over a wide field what law was to be administered—British or Indian.

By an Act of 1744 the East India Company's privileges were due to determine in 1780, unless extended. When the time came Lord North moved that the Company should be given notice of its impending dissolution. The Opposition was furious at what it regarded as a Government attempt to secure complete and direct control of the patrimony of the East. Fox asked ^a whether the Noble Lord could not rest content with having lost America, or was he determined to toss India too into the limbo? Burke was characteristically even more violent. He described ^a North's proposal as " the most wicked, absurd, abandoned, profligate, mad, and drunken intention " which had ever been conceived. It was by one of the stranger ironies of history that less than four years later, in the Autumn of 1783, Burke should have been

found seated with Fox and North upon the Treasury Bench, engaged in forwarding as energetically as he could North's profligate and drunken intention of 1780, under the revised (1783) description of "The Magna Carta of Hindostan." For the present the Opposition was so far successful that North abandoned his proposal ; the Company's privileges were extended for a further term and two Parliamentary Committees were set up to enquire into Indian affairs. The first of these was a Select Committee under the chairmanship of General Smith ; it was appointed in February, 1781, and was composed of some of the most distinguished members of the Opposition among whom Burke was by far the most active. The Committee was directed to consider the state of the administration of justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, but it was further instructed later to consider the whole question of British rule in the East. This Committee kept the Opposition quiet for many months. Eleven Reports were drawn up, and the ninth and eleventh were drafted by Burke himself. In addition to the Select Committee a Secret Committee, composed of prominent Ministerialists, was appointed at the end of April, 1781, under the chairmanship of Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate for Scotland. It was directed to enquire into the causes of the war in the Carnatic and it eventually produced six Reports.

In the early morning of August 17th, 1780, Warren Hastings and Philip Francis drove to a meeting at Belvedere, on the outskirts of Calcutta ; at that moment the fate of India to a large extent depended upon the outcome of their proceedings. Francis had trouble with his pistol which had to be recharged ; Hastings took careful aim and brought his opponent down with a ball in the right breast. The wound was painful but not dangerous, and it took Francis one month only in which

to recover. He spent three months collecting material against Hastings and then, after ringing down the curtain on his Indian activities, sailed for England in December, 1780, baffled but seething with venom, and resolute for revenge.

Francis was a long time coming home, but he reached England at last in October, 1781. He was in time to fling himself body and soul into the work of the Select Committee, and it was not long before he had Edmund Burke, who was the driving force behind the Committee, completely in his pocket :

“ I am the acorn ; he is the oak,” Francis said ¹⁰ of the Ninth Report which Burke drafted : “ I think I can say with truth that there is not one material principle or deduction in it which may not be fairly and honestly traced back to some antecedent opinions of my own, dilated and expanded by a superior power.”

Burke paid tribute to Francis in his speech on Fox’s India Bill in December, 1783. He spoke ¹¹ of Francis as a man “ whose deep reach of thought, whose large legislative conceptions and whose grand plans of policy make the most shining part of our Reports, from whence we have all learned our lessons if we have learned any good ones.”

As soon as they came into power the Rockingham Whigs began at once to take action against what Burke called “ the class of Indian delinquents,” but the task proved more formidable than had been supposed. Bills of Pains and Penalties were introduced into the Commons against two ex-Presidents of the Council of Madras (Sir Thomas Rumbold and John Whitehill), but after a series of interminable debates the proceedings had to be dropped on account of the impossibility of keeping a quorum of the House in being to hear the cases. For once Burke permitted himself to depart from the attitude

FIRST MOVES AGAINST HASTINGS

of judicial reserve which he habitually maintained in the *Annual Register* : " That a Bill," he wrote,¹² " the result of such long and laborious enquiries, a Bill introduced, received, and proceeded upon by the House with so much solemnity should be suffered thus to fall to the ground is a circumstance on which we are at a loss to comment." So ended the first attempt of that Parliament to punish Indian delinquency. A second attempt, aimed at bigger game, met with a like fate. On April 15th, 1782, Dundas moved a Resolution demanding the recall of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal, and of Hornby, the President of the Council of Bombay, for having acted in sundry instances in a manner repugnant to the honour and policy of Great Britain, thereby bringing great calamities upon India and enormous expense upon the East India Company. This Resolution was carried on May 30th, 1782. By the terms of the Regulating Act Parliament had now to adopt the roundabout course of requesting the Directors of the East India Company to petition the Crown in the matter of the recall of Hastings and Hornby. On June 19th, 1782, the Court of Proprietors of the Company defied the House of Commons by declining to petition the Crown. The Directors, who were in a more responsible position than the Proprietors, nevertheless reviewed the situation. After holding no less than eleven meetings they decided reluctantly, by a narrow majority, on October 2nd, 1782, to approach the Crown in the sense of the Resolution of the House of Commons. But no letters of recall were ever sent because the Court of Proprietors met at once and proceeded to revoke, by a large majority, the decision of the Directors. So ended the second attempt of that Parliament to punish Indian delinquency. Warren Hastings was accustomed to call the Proprietors of East India Stock

his "constituents," and when in March, 1783, the Company applied to Parliament for a loan, Burke said that he was at last convinced, after having studied the India Question for twenty years, that the relief and reformation of the Company must go together. The Company, he said,¹³ had violated the terms of its Charter and flown in the face of Parliament.

Burke was induced to acquiesce in the Fox-North Coalition, mainly by his desire of striking a blow at Hastings and reforming the Government of India. This motive explains Burke's conduct, but it can hardly excuse the grossness of the sacrifice of political principle to which he consented. Burke said that in politics he worshipped the god "Prudence," but he appeared sometimes to be flying before that god like Jonah from the presence of the Lord. Burke's sacrifice of political principle was particularly unfortunate because it meant that he was false to his own nature. The least suspicion that he was actuated by motives of self-interest was sufficient to bring his whole gospel of expediency into contempt. The Coalition had hardly assumed office before Burke found himself caught up in a situation of remarkable inconsistency. He had thundered for years against the iniquity of handing India over to Lord North and to the Crown ; he had argued that to do so would be to create a new and enormous source of influence which might sweep away the liberties of England. And now, joined suddenly to Lord North in an unnatural union, Burke prepared to hand over the whole of the political and military powers of the East India Company to a body of seven Commissioners who included Lord North's son, Colonel North, and six other friends of the Coalition. It was arranged that these Commissioners, who were all named in Fox's India Bill, should hold office for four years, and that the power of appointment

thereafter should be vested in the Crown. This was an extraordinary change of front, and as soon as the details were known there was an outcry from all over the country. While the India Bills were being prepared neither the Directors nor the Proprietors of the East India Company were consulted in any single particular, and this cavalier treatment caused every chartered interest in the country to join in a choral protest which was emphatic and prolonged. Fox introduced the first and most important of his two India Bills into the House of Commons on November 17th, 1783. It was based on the eleven Reports of the Select Committee and was drafted in the main from Burke's instructions. Considered objectively there was a good deal to be said for the provisions of Fox's Bill, but men were aghast at the indecent conjunction of names under which it was brought forward. Burke would formerly have given his life to prevent the patronage of India from falling into the hands of the Crown, and the arguments which he had once used against North were now turned with deadly effect against Fox and himself as they sat with North upon the Treasury Bench. The Commissioners whom Fox proposed to appoint were all men of weight, and there is no reason to suppose that the Government intended to abuse the powers for which it asked. Fox was the most liberal and generous-minded man alive, and there had been no need for Burke to convince him that the interests of the starving millions of Hindostan were to be preferred over those of a few hundred Proprietors of India Stock. Nevertheless, Fox's political record was so black that the country was unwilling to trust him. It was indisputable that under the provisions of his India Bills he would for four years have become the most powerful commoner in England. Like Alcibiades of old it was widely supposed that Fox aimed at the

supreme power, and that he intended to cement his hold upon the Government through the creation of a vast plutocracy of dependent " nabobs." On every side men asked each other how it was possible to allow a gang of slippery politicians who had shown themselves to be so unscrupulous in their method of obtaining office to enjoy for four years a monopoly of the patronage of the East. A cartoon which was published by Sayer at this time gave exact expression to the popular mood. Fox was shown as Carlo Khan, the King of Bengal, riding up to the India House in Leadenhall Street on an elephant which caricatured the features of Lord North, and led by Burke in the guise of a turbaned trumpeter.

Burke suffered on the whole even more than Fox from the odium which Fox's India Bills excited. Both men, politically, were opportunists, but their opportunism was based upon very different grounds. Fox's opportunism sprang from motives of cheerful self-interest, mingled with such an unusual degree of good fellowship and open-heartedness towards the whole of mankind that he was by far the best-loved man of his generation. Burke's opportunism excluded self-interest entirely, and sprang from motives so pure and noble that, like the great prophets of old, he was revered by the few, but hated and misunderstood by the many. Fox never for a moment pretended to be anything other than he was, while Burke, owing to his possession of a very ordinary and fallible human judgment, appeared not infrequently to be a hypocrite. When his passions betrayed him into actions which seemed to contradict his intentions, Burke invariably burst into flame. At such times he ceased to be rational and defended both his actions and his intentions in the language of an outraged archangel.

Burke supported Fox's India Bill in a great speech in



Corlo Khan's triumphal Entry into Lendenhall Street

urke blows his trumpet

the House of Commons on December 1st, 1783. He affirmed ¹⁴ that the Company, by abusing its privileges, had broken the contract under which its Charter had been granted ; in those circumstances, he said, the Government had formulated its proposals which were intended to constitute the “ Magna Carta ” of Hindostan. Burke painted a rhetorical and idealized representation of the antiquity and moral excellence of Indian civilization, and he went on to compare ¹⁵ the former Asiatic invasions with the effects of the English Conquest :

“ The Asiatic conquerors very soon abated of their ferocity, because they made the conquered country their own. They rose or fell with the rise and fall of the country they lived in. Fathers there deposited the hopes of their posterity ; and children there beheld the monuments of their fathers. Here their lot was finally cast ; and it is the natural wish of all that their lot should not be cast in a bad land. Poverty, sterility, and desolation, are not a recreating prospect to the eye of man, and there are very few who can bear to grow old among the curses of a whole people. . . . But under the English Government all this order is reversed. The Tartar invasion was mischievous ; but it is our protection that destroys India. It was their enmity ; but it is our friendship. Our conquest there after twenty years is as crude as it was the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men (boys almost) govern there without society and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England,—nor indeed any species of intercourse but that which is necessary to making a sudden fortune with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the im-

THE "MAGNA CARTA" OF HINDOSTAN

petuosity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave ; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a prey that is continually wasting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost forever to India."

Burke pointed out that the English had founded in India no retributory charities to compensate for ages to the poor for the rapine and injustice of a day : " Their prey is lodged in England ; and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about in every breaking up of the monsoon over a remote and unhearing ocean." We had erected no monuments, no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools. We had built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs : " Every other conqueror of every other description had left some monument either of state or beneficence behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by anything better than the orang-outang or the tiger."

Burke spoke ¹⁶ by way of peroration a few words about Charles Fox. His praise of Fox was in the grand manner :

" He has put to hazard his ease, his security, his interest, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people he has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory. . . . Let him use his time. Let him give the whole length of the reins to his benevolence.

THE CAUSE OF INDIA

He is now on a great eminence where the eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live long ; he may do much ; but here is his summit : he can never exceed what he does this day. He has faults, but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre and sometimes impede the march of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In these faults there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind."

Burke referred in conclusion to Fox's descent from Henry IV of France, who had wished that he might live to see a fowl in the pot of every peasant in his kingdom. Fox too, Burke suggested, might " this day say this at least with truth,—that he secures the rice in his pot to every man in India."

The India Bills passed the House of Commons, where recent legislation had diminished the King's influence, by 208 votes to 108. They were, however, thrown out by the Lords. Relying upon the popular hostility which the Coalition and the India Bills had jointly excited, the King let it be known that he would regard any Peer who should vote for the Bills as an enemy. The Commons, thereupon, voted, on December 17th, 1783, that it was a breach of the fundamental privileges of Parliament to report any opinion of His Majesty upon any Bill during its progress through either House of Parliament, with the object of influencing the votes of Members. The King did not hesitate for a moment, and he seldom in his life did a more popular action than when, in defiance of the House of Commons, he dismissed the Coalition from power. His messengers called upon Fox and North at about midnight with orders that they should

FALL OF THE COALITION

surrender their seals and return them through their respective under-secretaries, as His Majesty was not desirous of seeing them personally in connection with their dismissal. Burke received a note the following morning informing him that his services as Paymaster were no longer required. William Pitt, Chatham's younger son, was offered, and immediately accepted, the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thus, after a little more than eight months, the unnatural Coalition was ignominiously driven out of power by the angry monarch whom it had offended.

Burke never enjoyed office again after the fall of the Coalition, and he and his son lost an official residence and four thousand five hundred pounds a year between them. Richard Burke the elder, though he became Recorder of Bristol, lost the joint tenure of the Secretaryship of the Treasury which he had held with young Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and was soon swimming for bare life in a sea of financial troubles. Only William Burke in India still managed to retain the job which Edmund had had created for him, and he felt it necessary to apologize to the other Burkes for his inability to bring off that *coup* over the remittance of the public debt to England which would have had the effect of putting one hundred and fifty thousand pounds into all their pockets :

“ If your father has power,” William implored ¹⁷ young Richard Burke, “ drive the Direction to renew their original Order to pay me the full Balances. I find it is uphill work to get anything done on that Ground without a renewal of the Company's Order. Their Order was to pay *me*, by name, the Balances, and I see plainly that Grenville and Ld. Mulgrave affect to believe

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I have regularly received them. If I had done so, my Richard, I should not have proved the *inutile lignum* to you that I am ; and if I do get it, or any part of it, to whom do I owe it but to your father ? ”

Disappointed of all his hopes William succumbed slowly to the ravages of the climate and to the seductions of the bottle. He was loud and drunken, and in the end, according to William Hickey, the only friends he had left were a few handsome, flashy young cads whom everybody detested. He was an incompetent Paymaster and was found ¹⁸ to be almost unbelievably ignorant and careless in regard to all pecuniary matters. Even young Richard Burke, who managed the details of William's complicated affairs in England, was constrained to write ¹⁹ to his “ Uncle ” : “ Whenever you have occasion to write concerning a sum of money, write it always at length, and not in figures, for, begging your pardon, you hardly ever cypher without some gross mistake such as hundreds for thousands, and vice versa.” Edmund's son grew up in the possession of some estimable qualities, besides remarkable, though feminine, good looks. He was the apple of William's eye, but outside his family he was generally disliked and regarded as a supercilious cub.

The fall of the Coalition was a serious blow to the Burkes, and Edmund was left to derive such satisfaction as he could from his election to Brooks's Club,²⁰ to a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and to the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University where his friend Adam Smith held the Chair of Logic. Burke was installed as Lord Rector on April 18th, 1784, in the Common Hall of Glasgow University. In the following year, 1785, while on his way up to preside at the election of his successor, Burke stayed at Minto with Sir Gilbert

Elliot, and met a Dr. Somerville, a well-known Presbyterian minister. Somerville was surprised ²¹ to hear Burke speak in disparaging terms of the Americans whom he had so often eulogized in public. Burke was enthusiastic in his praise of Washington's character, but he thought that democracy was a danger in the South and that the Southern States might one day attempt to leave the Union.

After the fall of the Coalition William Pitt was faced with an exceedingly difficult situation which he handled with consummate skill. His Cabinet was weak and divided, and the Opposition, naturally, could count on a majority of votes in the House of Commons. Fox and Burke made merry over Pitt's "mince-pie" Administration ; they regarded it as a boyish freak which was certain to be short-lived :—

“ A sight to make surrounding nations stare,
A Kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care.”

It was, however, a blow to Fox that his uncle, the Duke of Richmond, was included in the Cabinet. Richmond was influenced partly by pique at the choice of Portland, instead of himself, to lead the Rockingham Party ; partly by Pitt's declared desire of instituting some measure of Parliamentary Reform for which the Duke had long been agitating. Pitt had the support of his Sovereign and of the House of Lords, besides the sympathy of the country at large, with which to face the hostile majority of the House of Commons ; despite his youth and inexperience he completely out-manceuvred Fox within the space of a few months. Pitt's policy was to discredit the Opposition, and to win beyond all question the confidence of the country before he appealed to it at a General Election. Fox's policy ought to have been to force an immediate Dissolution, in order to secure

from the country a vote of "No Confidence" in the new Ministers whom the King had chosen in defiance of the majority of the House of Commons. In fact, however, the idea of appealing to the country terrified Fox, because he knew how bitterly his unscrupulous conduct in forming a Coalition with Lord North had been resented. He therefore did everything he could to prevent a Dissolution, and even enunciated the extraordinary theory of which nothing had previously or has ever since been heard that the King had no power to dissolve Parliament in the middle of the business of a Session. Fox hoped by postponing supplies and acting in as factious a manner as possible to bring Government to a standstill and compel the King to recall the Coalition. His efforts did in fact succeed so far that efforts were made²² to bring about a Coalition between Fox and Pitt on the basis of dropping Lord North and altering Fox's India Bills. Fox, however, remained deaf to all suggestions of this kind, and Pitt went quietly to work, in consultation with the Directors of the East India Company, to prepare an India Bill of his own. Pitt was careful to avoid Fox's mistake of laying hands upon the patronage of the Company, and he manœuvred so cleverly that Fox, when he rose to oppose Pitt's Bill, appeared to say that the feature of his own Bill by which he set the most store was the proposal to transfer Indian patronage from the Company to himself. Pitt's India Bill, which was passed into law during the next Parliament, lasted until the Mutiny and constituted a really effective measure of reform. It is, however, worthy of note that a few years later Pitt did quietly appropriate a considerable measure of Indian patronage with which he proceeded to corrupt the whole of Scotland for eighteen years. Pitt needed this patronage in order to correct the electoral influence of heredity which at that

time was excessive in the politics of the Northern Kingdom.

Pitt's India Bill was negatived in the House of Commons by the narrow margin of eight votes, but the popularity of the boy Prime Minister was growing every day. Burke on one occasion exasperated the House by denouncing Pitt's Bill as a deliberate insult to the House of Commons. One member rose and told Burke to his face that no more deliberate insult had ever been offered to the House than Burke's own conduct in the case of Powell and Bembridge. He threatened,²³ if Burke continued to be obstructive, to move for papers relative to that incident. Pitt increased his reputation enormously by the action which he took after the death of Sir Edward Walpole in January, 1784. At Walpole's death the Clerkship of the Pells fell vacant, and it would have been in accord with the practice of the times if Pitt, whose private means as a younger son were exiguous, had taken the sinecure for himself. Instead Pitt bestowed the famous clerkship upon Isaac Barré, in return for the surrender of a much-criticized pension of three thousand two hundred pounds a year which that politician had been awarded by the Rockingham Whigs when he gave up the Pay Office to Burke. This noble gesture of disinterestedness did not fail of its effect, and at the end of February, 1784, Pitt was presented with the Freedom of London. Fox's majority in the House of Commons fell lower and lower, and on March 8th, 1784, it amounted to no more than a single vote. On March 23rd, Pitt decided that the time was ripe for a dissolution, and after a delay of two days which was caused by the mysterious disappearance of the Great Seal, Parliament was dissolved.

The General Election of 1784 was a resounding triumph for Pitt, and the supporters of the Coalition

were put to rout. Even in its unreformed state the electoral machinery was sufficiently delicate to register the overwhelming strength of the national feeling against Fox ; and Government bribery, which was brought to bear to the full extent to which it was available, lent weight to the swing of the pendulum. Almost all the larger constituencies expelled the Opposition candidates of whom no less than 160 lost their seats and became known as "Fox's martyrs." Among the defeated was Lord Verney who, as he was an Irish Peer, had sat for years in the Commons. Verney had already, during the previous year, caused Burke much embarrassment by filing ²⁴ a bill unsuccessfully against him for the repayment of an alleged debt of six thousand pounds. After losing the protection of Parliament Verney fled to France in order to escape being arrested for debt. He lost all his Irish *bonhomie* and became sour and venomous ; he was for ever devising plans ²⁵ for bringing William home, and for suing all the Burkes for the moneys of which he claimed they had defrauded him.

When the new Parliament assembled in May, 1784, Burke found that a generation had arisen which "knew not Joseph." A large majority of the younger Members made up their minds at once that they would not stand indefinitely any number of long-winded orations by Burke on the difficult, distant and unpopular subject of India. Burke had incurred great odium by the part which he had played in the Coalition, and a kind of anti-Burke combination was now formed in the House of Commons. As soon as Burke rose to speak, and especially if he was about to speak upon India, there was a concerted outbreak of coughing, rustling of papers and stamping of feet. If these methods failed to silence Burke or to provoke him into losing his temper, a solid phalanx of young Members would sometimes rise and

THE DINNER-BELL

ostentatiously march out of the House. Burke bitterly resented this treatment, and on several occasions he appealed without success to the respect which was due to his grey hairs. He became known as the Dinner-Bell, and he began to feel old and tired and unhappy. But the more Burke was baited the more fiercely blazed his fiery zeal for bringing home to face their trials in England the heads of the British Government in the East. His zeal in this cause, in which he persisted against odds which would have daunted almost anyone else, was the chief cause of the spectacular and unprecedented decline of Burke's popularity in the House of Commons. In former times Burke's violence had been privileged ; it was well recognized and always passed over in silence. But the temper of the new House of Commons was markedly different. When Burke declared, on June 8th, 1784, that he little minded the ill-treatment of a parcel of boys he was called sharply to order from the Treasury Bench and warned ²⁶ that if he continued to insult the House of Commons his extravagance would no longer be tolerated. Six weeks later, on July 30th, 1784, Burke moved for papers relative to the conduct of Warren Hastings, but he was silenced by a loud and sustained clamour. Placing his hand on a volume of the Reports of the Select Committee on India, which was lying on the Table, Burke cried ²⁷ in the manner of a Hebrew Prophet :

“ I swear by this book that the wrongs done to humanity in the Eastern world shall be avenged on those who inflicted them. They will find, when the measure of their iniquity is full, that Providence was not asleep. The wrath of Heaven will sooner or later fall upon a Nation that suffers with impunity its Rulers thus to oppress the weak and innocent.”

Burke declared that he was well content to have sacrificed such little popularity as he possessed on the altar of what he knew to be his duty. Men might argue about Indian conditions for as long as they pleased, but they should be taught that one standard alone existed by which the Judge of the whole earth would try them. Edmund's mind was set, and not even William writing from Madras had power to move him. William was afraid lest Edmund's exuberance might damage his prospects in India, and he told ²⁸ young Richard Burke: "The English here are a respectable, humane, friendly people, nor can I for the Soul of me feel as your father does for the Black Primates. . . . Do say for me to your father that the abstract right of things in the East has scarcely an existence; all is Usurpation and Force." Edmund's eyes, as he read these words, must have threatened to pop out of his head. The cause of India moved him more deeply than any other cause in which he was ever engaged. As he remembered all that Francis had taught him about the State of Bengal and the treatment of the "Black Primates," even the darling wrongs of Ireland were momentarily forgotten: they were, he told ²⁹ the House of Commons, "trivial" in comparison with the more imminent and extensive wants of Hindostan.

In July, 1784, while Burke was wrestling with tremendous odds in his attempt to strike at Hastings in India, he was troubled by a lawsuit of an extremely unpleasant kind which he felt obliged to bring in defence of his moral character. The Press in that age was so unscrupulous that any circumstance was liable to be seized upon if it offered the chance of smirching the reputation of an opponent. Burke had inevitably provoked comment in the past by his interference on behalf of unnatural offenders, and in April, 1780, he had taken



at March, 1886

SUBLIME ORATORY — *A DISPLAY OF IT.*

the first steps ³⁰ towards bringing an action for Libel against the editor of one newspaper who had accused him of sympathy with homosexual practices. On that occasion, after an apology had been tendered, Burke did not proceed with his action. He doubtless reflected that it was on the whole best to treat calumnies of that kind with contempt. Burke's interest in this matter was humanitarian, and he was anxious to obtain a slight alteration in the law. Cases had occurred in which men convicted of sodomy and placed in the pillory had been pelted to death by the mob before they were released. Burke went out of his way in the House of Commons to condemn sodomy in unequivocal terms, but he urged that those who had been convicted of practising it ought not to suffer any worse punishment than the term of imprisonment to which they had been sentenced. He contended that the pillory was not, in the circumstances, an appropriate part of the punishment which the law reserved for homosexuals, and with characteristic earnestness he endeavoured to see that the law, so long as it existed, was not enforced in that particular.

As Burke's unpopularity increased during the period of the Coalition, the old whispers against him were revived, and eventually, against the advice of his friends, a Writ for Libel was issued on Burke's behalf, against Henry Woodfall, the editor and publisher of the *Public Advertiser*. The case was tried by a Mr. Justice Buller before a Special Jury on July 14th, 1784. Burke asked for five thousand pounds from Woodfall: the Jury awarded him one hundred.³¹

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Impeachment of Warren Hastings

IN December, 1784, Burke lost his old friend, Samuel Johnson ; Bennet Langton, an original member of the Literary Club, related ¹ to Boswell the last scene between Johnson and Burke. Langton found Burke and four or five other friends sitting with Johnson, and he heard Burke say :

“ I am afraid, sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you.”

“ No, sir,” said Johnson, “ it is not so ; and I must be in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me.”

In a tremulous voice expressive of being very tenderly affected, Burke replied :

“ My dear sir, you have always been too good to me.”

Immediately afterwards he went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men. The loss of Johnson was a great grief to Burke, whose zeal against Hastings was beginning to put an appreciable strain on some of his most intimate private friendships. Sir William Jones, another member of the Club, wrote indignantly from Calcutta to protest against Burke’s reported declaration that he would do everything in his power to secure his recall if he should hear that he had sided with Hastings : “ What ! ” Sir William exclaimed,² “ if you *hear* it only !—without examination ! without evidence ! Ought you not, rather as a friend . . . to reject any such information with

THE IMPEACHMENT OF WARREN HASTINGS

disdain as improbable and defamatory? Ought you not to know, from your long experience of my principles, that whilst I am a Judge I would rather perish than *side* with any man." Sir William had recently been sent out as a Judge to India; he sympathized with Hastings' interest in oriental studies, and was hurt by such an exhibition of intemperate zeal on the part of a man whom he had regarded as an intimate friend.

On January 25th, 1785, Burke protested against the absence from the King's Speech in opening Parliament of any reference to India. He reminded the House of the Resolution demanding Hastings' recall which had been carried some two and a half years before; and he said that it was incredible that a man who stood branded as a criminal in the Journals of the House of Commons should continue nevertheless to command Britain's armies in the East and to direct the revenues of Bengal. A month later Burke made one of the most famous of his great speeches on a Motion by Fox calling for an enquiry into the debts of the Nawab of Arcot. Mahomet Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, had been one of the oppressors of William Burke's employer, the Rajah of Tanjore. He owed about three million pounds to some of the East India Company's servants, and Burke contended that these men were using the Nawab as a tool. He argued that the Nawab was being maintained on his throne by the East India Company solely in order that the Company's servants might continue to receive a usurious rate of interest on the moneys which they had compelled him to borrow. The Nawab of Arcot had been paying his debts out of the revenues of the Carnatic and out of such conquests as that of the little neighbouring State of Tanjore which he was enabled to make with the support and encouragement of the Company. Burke declared that the Carnatic, recently devastated by

HYDER ALI'S VENGEANCE

war, was incapable of supporting the unjust charge of the Nawab of Arcot's debts: "On every country the first creditor is the plough," and the "corps of fictitious creditors" would have to silence their inauspicious tongues, hold off their "profane, unhallowed paws" until the holy work of the restoration of the country was accomplished.

The principal object of the secret project of plunder formulated by the Nawab and his creditors had been Hyder Ali's Kingdom of Mysore. Burke described³ the terrible vengeance which Hyder Ali had exacted:

"He resolved in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation of the Nawab of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the art of destruction, and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc and desolation into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains; whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents on the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard were mercy to that new havoc.

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A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants, flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered ; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest fled to the walled cities ; but escaping from fire, sword and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

“The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal, and all was done by charity that private charity could do : but it was a people in beggary ; it was a nation which stretched out its hand for food. For months together these creatures of sufference, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austere fasts, perished by an hundred a day in the streets of Madras ; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the street, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. . . .”

After such a catastrophe the first need was for Government to restore a semblance of order and prosperity : “ Here the road to economy lies not through receipt, but through expense, and in that country Nature has given no short cuts to your object. Men must propagate, like other animals, by the mouth. Never did oppression light the nuptial torch ; never did extortion and usury spread out the genial bed.” Burke concluded ‘ with a Rabelaisian outburst against Dundas, the former Chairman of the Secret Committee, who had declared that the Nawab’s debts were a subject of too delicate a nature

SIX GREAT CHOPPING BASTARDS

to be pursued with profit. Burke considered that Dundas and delicacy were rather a strange combination. He pointed to the six Reports of the Secret Committee which were lying on the Table, and asked Dundas if he really wanted to pretend to be such a little delicate virgin after having given birth to "six great chopping bastards, each as lusty as an infant Hercules." He thought that he might more fitly compare Dundas, disburthened of these Reports, to "the sow of imperial augury, lying in the mud with all the prodigies of her fertility about her, as evidence of her delicate amours." It was one o'clock in the morning when Burke sat down, and there were loud cries of "Divide!" Pitt held a hurried consultation with his friends to decide whether any answer was needed; they agreed that it was not. The flow of Burke's oratory had passed harmlessly over the heads of Honourable Members; the question was taken, and Fox's Motion was negatived by 164 votes to 69.

When Hastings learned the details of Pitt's new India Bill he decided that the time had come for him to lay down his heavy burden. Pitt's Bill deprived the Proprietors of East India Stock of much of their power, and Hastings had always regarded the Proprietors as the most loyal and consistent of his supporters. Hastings penned his resignation letter on New Year's Day, 1785, and six months later, on June 13th, he landed at Plymouth. One week after his arrival in England, on June 20th, 1785, Burke gave formal notice in the House of Commons that he would, in due course, bring in a Motion respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India.

Hastings spent the months which followed his return at Daylesford, the home of his ancestors near Cheltenham which it had been his life's ambition to repurchase from

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the hands of strangers. He wrote ^s to a friend in December, 1785, to say that he had no idea whether Burke really meant what he had threatened. He had not heard of Burke for months, and he had made no enquiries about him. Burke in the meantime was engaged with Philip Francis, Gilbert Elliot and young French Laurence at Beaconsfield in the task of drawing up formal Articles of Impeachment against Hastings. When the new session opened on January 24th, 1786, Major Scott, Hastings' friend and spokesman in the Commons, challenged Burke to make a beginning. Burke retorted that he did not take directions from the enemy. On February 17th, 1786, Burke had the Resolutions of May 28th, 1782, censuring the conduct of Hastings and vainly demanding his recall, read formally by the Clerk from the Journals of the House. Burke then gave formal notice that he intended to move the Impeachment of Warren Hastings for the crimes which he had committed against the Princes and Peoples of India. On April 4th, 1786, Burke exhibited to the House of Commons the first eleven Articles of his projected Impeachment; by the end of May the number of Articles was increased to twenty-two. The House acted in this matter as a kind of Grand Jury. It had to consider each Article separately and to decide whether or not a case existed to go for trial before the Lords. While Burke was exhibiting his charges Pitt and the other Ministers maintained an attitude of strict impartiality; they gave no sign that they were influenced in any way by the fact that the business of bringing forward the Impeachment was entirely the work of the Opposition. Whatever feeling of hostility Burke may have excited against himself by his persistence in forcing an unwelcome subject upon the attention of the House of Commons was entirely subordinated, as soon



for the first printer, as the last directed by J. Braham. May 2nd 1786

by Disappointment **IMPEACHMENT.**

Executed by Envy

His notions do fit things so well,
That which is which, he cannot tell.
But oft' times, tho' sure as a gun
Mistakes the other for the one,
For whilst one thing seems to catch the eye
To another he'd his hand apply,

BURKE.

With words honest Edmund has the knack
To paint, as suits best, things white or black.
Thus Hastings is black, which is as clear
As that Porvell did pure white appear,
But he knows what's what, and that's as high
As Oriental wit e'er could fly

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as the issue was fairly raised, to the deep concern which was felt on every side for the honour and dignity of Parliament.

Warren Hastings, when he was invited to attend at the Bar of the House of Commons on the first three days of May, 1786, would have done well to reserve his defence. By attending he committed an error of judgment, for it was impossible at a few days' notice to prepare an adequate reply to Burke's voluminous charges. Burke's Articles of Impeachment were the fruit of years of research and months of detailed preparation; his passionate sincerity was evident, and in face of it the casual and occasionally defiant tone of Hastings' discursive defence, which failed to cover the whole ground of the accusations, did not create a very good impression. Burke moved his first Article in the House of Commons on June 1st, 1786, but it was rejected upon a technical point. Hastings' alleged offence had been committed before he assumed office under the Regulating Act, and the House decided that his action, whether criminal or not, had been tacitly condoned by his subsequent appointment as Governor-General. This decision was a blow to Burke, but he could at least be certain that no question of any subsequent condonation arose in connection with the second Article in his indictment which Fox moved on June 13th.

This second Article concerned Hastings' treatment of Cheyt Singh, the Rajah of Benares. The case against Hastings was that he had violated an undertaking that the annual rate of tribute paid by the Rajah should not be increased. It was alleged that after driving Cheyt Singh into rebellion by his unjust demands, Hastings had finally deposed him and handed his dominions over to a nephew in return for twice the amount of tribute which had formerly been paid. Fox, Burke and Francis

all spoke upon these facts, and when Pitt finally rose there was intense excitement to hear what he would say. Pitt declared that having regard to the critical situation which had existed in India at the time, Hastings was justified in disregarding the agreement with Benares and in demanding additional aid. However, when he considered the fine of fifty lakhs of rupees which Hastings had imposed upon the Rajah for contumacy and rebellion, Pitt shifted his ground. He said that the fine was exorbitant and tyrannical, and that he proposed accordingly to vote for Fox's motion in the belief that it afforded a serious and substantial charge for Hastings to answer. This speech was as decisive as it was unexpected, and Fox's motion was carried by a majority of forty votes. On that same evening King George sent ⁶ his Prime Minister a friendly little note in which he reminded him that it was not possible to carry on business in India with the same degree of moderation as might have been suitable in Europe.

The Session was now far advanced, and despite a protest from Burke, consideration of the next Article in his Indictment which concerned Hastings' treatment of the Begums of Oude was postponed. The case of the Begums was finally brought forward by Sheridan on February 7th, 1787, after the lapse of more than six months. Sheridan's speech on this occasion was by universal consent one of the most brilliant and effective which had ever been heard within the walls of Parliament ; the Debate was at first suspended and finally adjourned in order that Members might not be compelled to record their votes while under the spell of that five and a half hours' flood of incomparable Irish oratory. Hastings had seized a vast treasure which belonged to the Begums of Oude, after imprisoning and beating two of their eunuchs. Hastings alleged that the Begums had

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supported the rebellion of Cheyt Singh, and that a part of their treasure at any rate was due to the Company ; he seems to have spent all the money which he seized in the Company's service. The fact that he had so spent the money would not, of course, in itself have justified the spoliation of the Begums, and Hastings had, moreover, been so imprudent as to suggest to the Directors in London that they might make him a present of one hundred thousand pounds in token of their approval of his conduct. This suggestion he had deliberately kept from the knowledge of his Council. Such looseness in money affairs was unfortunate, but the truth was that Hastings cared for almost nothing outside his task of ruling India with a strong hand. When he needed money for his Government or for himself he expected it to be provided in the most expeditious and convenient manner, but in general he was careless of his own interest ; he made no attempt to amass a large personal fortune ; and he did not return from India a rich man. The ends which Hastings pursued while he was in the East were political ; he was often reckless in his choice of means to attain those ends.

Sheridan's motion was duly carried in the Commons, and the remaining Articles of Impeachment were likewise adopted. On one occasion Burke raised a laugh against Hastings' friend, Major Scott. Scott had pleaded that in Benares itself a number of temples had recently been erected in Hastings' honour. Burke retorted that among the innumerable gods of India were some of the most foul and loathsome demons which the imagination of man had ever conceived ; the only reason why such creatures were worshipped was that in this way the terrified natives hoped to placate their sadistic and inveterate malignancy. On May 10th,

HASTINGS ARRESTED AND CHARGED

1787, the Commons resolved that Warren Hastings should be impeached, and the majority of the House attended Burke immediately to the Bar of the House of Lords in order to hear him solemnly impeach Hastings of High Crimes and Misdemeanours, in the name of the Commons of Great Britain. Four days later Burke carried the revised Articles of Impeachment up to the House of Lords. The last-minute addition of a further Article brought the total number up to twenty-two, of which the greater part referred to the affairs of Oude. Hastings was charged with Tyranny and Spoliation, with the Violation of Treaties, with Corruption and Peculation, and with an Unjust Settlement of the Land Revenues of Bengal. Hastings was arrested on May 21st, 1787, and carried to the Bar of the House of Lords to hear the Articles of Impeachment read. When the reading was ended he was released on bail. Twenty Managers of the Impeachment were appointed by the Commons, among whom Burke was accorded the first place. The other Managers included Fox, Sheridan, William Windham of Felbrigg in Norfolk—a young man who was devotedly attached to Burke—General Burgoyne and Sir Gilbert Elliot. To Burke's intense dismay an adverse vote of the House of Commons vetoed the appointment of Philip Francis as a Manager of the Impeachment. As Francis was well known to be Hastings' bitterest enemy this decision was in every way a proper one. Hastings retained for his defence the services of three of the most eminent lawyers of the day—Law, afterwards Lord Ellenborough, Dallas and Plumer.

On December 12th, 1787, Sir Gilbert Elliot moved in the Commons six Articles of Impeachment against Sir Elijah Impey, formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal. Philip Francis, who now sat in the Commons, entertained a personal grudge against Impey

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which whetted the edge of his vindictiveness. One night in February, 1779, before he had left India, Francis was caught climbing down the balcony of a Mrs. Grand, a delicious seventeen-year-old beauty. He was bound with ropes by Mr. Grand's servants, who professed astonishment when they had secured their victim, to find in place of the burglar they had expected a member of the Supreme Council of Bengal. The husband divorced his wife and sued Francis for damages. The Supreme Court awarded him a sum of fifty thousand rupees. Francis never forgave the Chief Justice for the part which he played in this case, and he did not even long enjoy the lady whose favours he had won. After a short period as his mistress Mrs. Grand made her way to France, where, among a number of gay adventures, she became the wife of Talleyrand. The most serious charge which Gilbert Elliot now exhibited against Impey related to the trial of Nuncomar, a Brahmin of the highest rank who was a particular enemy of Hastings. In March, 1775, Nuncomar had preferred charges of peculation against Hastings in the Supreme Court. Hastings disdained to reply, but inspired by Francis a majority of the Council resolved that he was guilty. Immediately afterwards Nuncomar was accused before Impey in the Supreme Court by a private prosecutor. It was alleged that he had forged a bond, and Hastings always denied that he was privy to this charge in any way. Although it was not quite clear under the Regulating Act whether English law was intended to be applied to Indians in such cases, Nuncomar was thrown into prison, tried, convicted and hanged. Impey was heard at the Bar of the House of Commons in February, 1788. He spoke extremely well, without any notes, and when the House divided, the motion that he should be impeached was defeated by 73 votes to 35.

MORE PECUNIARY DISTRACTIONS

Burke's private affairs in the meantime were not prospering, and there is evidence ⁸ that Lord Verney was contemplating bringing an action against him for the recovery of certain moneys which it was alleged that Edmund owed him. This threat, in the end, did not materialize, but in the Autumn of 1787 Richard Burke the elder found it suddenly convenient to leave the country. He proceeded to Brussels, where he fell ill, and Edmund wrote ⁹ to him there from a full heart on November 21st, 1787 :

“ My ever dear Brother—ill, and ill in winter ! In poverty ! in exile ! But God is all sufficient ; and that we exist and exist with any degree of hope at all, is a proof of it. . . . I believe you went away before it was decided that we should have Westminster Hall. We are to have it—a thousand things draw me from the part which is allotted to myself, though I am always more or less about it ; and, in truth, the kind of distraction I am in hinders me from thinking properly on anything and may when the day comes, in a measure disqualifye me from answering the expectations of others, and my own wishes. But that and all other uneasy thoughts that crowd upon me I must keep at as great a distance as I can. . . .”

Richard Burke did not have to remain long abroad. The Duke of Portland came to his assistance ¹⁰ and when the trial of Hastings opened in Westminster Hall he enjoyed one of his rare briefs. Edmund, too, in his embarrassment, found that he possessed friends who honoured and loved him. On July 2nd, 1788, Dr. Brocklesby, with whom as a boy he had been at Ballitore School many years before, wrote ¹¹ begging his friend to accept a present of a thousand pounds. In accepting this gift Burke said ¹² that he would never be ashamed of being

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obliged to one who was incapable of turning his kindness into a burden.

The scene which opened in Westminster Hall on February 13th, 1788, was one of unparalleled magnificence ; it was a pageant of everything that England possessed of strength, ability and splendour. The House of Commons met at ten-thirty in the morning, and adjourned in procession to Westminster Hall led by the Committee of Managers of the Impeachment with Burke at their head. Half an hour afterwards the Members of the House of Lords rose, at a word from the Herald, and marched similarly in procession sweeping the floor with their robes of scarlet and gold. The attendants upon the Lord Chancellor went first, followed by the Officers of the House of Lords and two Clerks of the Crown in the Courts of Chancery and King's Bench. The Masters in Chancery, followed by the King's Sergeants and the Judges, marched two and two. After the Judges went a handful of boy Peers, and a number of Peers' eldest sons. The Yeoman Usher of the House went next, followed by Black Rod who headed the procession of Peers. The Barons marched first with Lord Heathfield, formerly General Elliot, the hero of Gibraltar, in the van. After the Barons went the Bishops, the Viscounts, the Earls, the Marquesses, the Dukes, the Archbishops. Behind the Archbishops strode the Sergeant-at-Arms with his Mace, leading on the Heralds and the Lord High Chancellor with his train. Cumberland, Gloucester, York—Princes of the Blood—marched with their trains immediately behind the Lord Chancellor. The young Prince of Wales brought up the rear. The King was not present in Westminster Hall, but most of the Royal Family attended. The Duchess of Gloucester occupied the Royal Box, accompanied by her little son and Mrs. Fitzherbert. The

leaders of Society, the Services, and the Arts attended, together with the heads of Foreign Missions accredited to the Court of St. James's. The Hall was draped in scarlet ; Cavalry patrolled the streets, and a numerous body of Footguards lined every avenue of approach. Inside Westminster Hall, close to the Royal Box, the Lord Chancellor took his seat upon the Woolsack under a gorgeous State Canopy with the Judges at his feet. On the left of the Lord Chancellor—an oasis of green cloth in the midst of a uniform blaze of scarlet—rose the tiered seats which had been set apart for the Commons. In front of the Commons on the floor of the Hall sat the Bishops, who faced the corps of Dukes and Marquesses. Behind the Dukes, and parted from them by no more than a thin red line of Viscounts, rose tier upon tier of seats filled with Peeresses and their daughters. The beauty of England was ranged in its high places, but the ladies had left their finery behind and were all in morning dresses. Accommodation for Peers' ticket-holders was provided on either side of the entrance leading from the House of Lords : it was said that in many cases fabulous sums had been paid for these seats. Over the heads of the Commons a special gallery had been constructed to hold the Duke of Newcastle, in his capacity of Auditor of the Exchequer, and his friends. The Queen, who was well disposed towards Hastings, elected to watch the proceedings from that eyrie. She was accompanied by the Princesses Mary, Elizabeth and Augusta. The Lord Chamberlain, the Deputy Chamberlain and the Lords Commissioner of the Board of Works all had private galleries assigned to them. Members of the Diplomatic Corps faced the Officers of the Royal Household and the Lord Chancellor's ticket-holders near the Royal Box on the left of the seats reserved for the Commons. Behind the Judges, on the floor of the Hall,

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sat the body of the Peerage—the Earls and the Barons. At the far end of the Hall, behind the Barons, sat the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, Hastings' principal accuser, surrounded by his fellow-members of the Committee of Managers of the Impeachment. Near by sat the Managers' Counsel, including the two Richard Burkes ; the Managers' Clerks ; the Prisoner's Counsel ; the Prisoner's Clerks ; the Clerks of the India House ; the Witnesses ; the Shorthand-Writers ; the Repeater of Evidence ; the Usher of the Black Rod ; the Deputy Usher ; the Sergeant-at-Arms ; the Deputy Sergeant ; and, in a special box set apart to contain him, charged with more enormous and extensive crimes than Nero and Caligula, the man upon whom the eyes of Europe were momentarily fixed, the Grand Delinquent of All India, Mr. Hastings, ex-Governor-General of Bengal.

The Impeachment of Hastings was the most spectacular achievement of Burke's career. As, however, with the Rockingham Party, so with the Impeachment, Burke made insufficient allowance for human weakness. The speeches of the Managers took weeks at a time to deliver ; individual charges were protracted for months, and the Trial itself lasted for seven years. A clear-cut verdict of " Guilty " seems never at any time to have constituted a major object of Burke's ambition :

" We know," he told ¹³ Philip Francis on December 13th, 1785, " that we bring before a bribed Tribunal a prejudged cause . . . Speaking for myself, my business is not to consider what will convict Mr. Hastings (a thing we all know to be impracticable) but what will acquit and justify myself to those few persons, and to those distant times, which may take a concern in these affairs and in the actors in them." There were moments, later, when Burke allowed himself to indulge faint hopes of securing at any rate a partial Conviction, but he felt

THE GRAND DELINQUENT OF ALL INDIA

that the Impeachment served its purpose if it taught England the true conception of her duty towards the peoples of India whom Providence had committed to her protection. In this respect it cannot be denied that the Impeachment effected great and enduring good, although this good was achieved at the cost of inflicting a measure of injustice upon Hastings, one of the earliest and most illustrious of the proconsuls.

The first two days of the Trial, February 13th and 14th, 1788, were occupied with the reading of Burke's charges and Hastings' replies. The Prosecution had hoped to conduct the Impeachment Article by Article, securing a verdict on each as the trial proceeded. However, the Court ruled that all the charges should be heard with all their evidence before any part of the defence was taken. On February 15th Burke began his four-day speech in opening the case for the Prosecution. He told ¹⁴ the Court that it was called upon to try the cause of Asia in the presence of Europe, and he said that the question at issue was not solely whether the prisoner at the bar was innocent or guilty, but whether millions of mankind should be made miserable or happy. Burke dealt fairly with the problem of the origin of British rule in India. "There is," he declared ¹⁵ on the second day of his speech, "a sacred Veil to be drawn over the beginnings of all Governments. Ours in India had an origin like those which time has sanctified by obscurity. Time, in the origin of most Governments, has thrown this mysterious Veil over them ; prudence and discretion make it necessary to throw something of the same drapery over more recent Foundations. . . . The first step to Empire is revolution, by which Power is conferred ; the next is good laws, good order, good institutions, to give that Power stability. I am sorry to say that the reverse of this Policy was the principle on

which the Gentlemen in India acted." This illuminating passage illustrates how firmly Burke's thought was built into a pre-existing bedrock of human nature and human experience. Burke accepted the fact that, human nature being what it is, conquests of one people by another will sometimes occur ; but on this realistic basis he proceeded to enunciate a profoundly constructive principle :

"The title of Conquest," Burke said,¹⁶ "makes no difference at all. . . . By Conquest, which is a more immediate designation of the hand of God, the Conqueror succeeds to all the painful duties and subordination to the Power of God which belonged to the Sovereign whom he has displaced, just as if he had come in by the positive law of some Descent or some Election."

Burke explained ¹⁷ that the most terrible crime which any man could commit in politics was to set up any kind of dictatorship. Hastings had pleaded that actions in Asia bore a different moral quality from that which the same actions would have borne in Europe :

"My lords, we positively deny that Principle. I am authorized and called upon to deny it. . . . *He* have Arbitrary Power ! My Lords, the East India Company have not Arbitrary Power to give him ; the King has no Arbitrary Power to give him ; your Lordships have not ; nor the Commons ; nor the whole Legislature. We have no Arbitrary Power to give, because Arbitrary Power is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will ; much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection,—all born equally, High and Low, Governors and Governed, in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent Law,

BURKE'S VIEW OF DICTATORSHIP

prior to all our devices and prior to all our contrivances, paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our very existence, by which we are knit and connected in the Eternal Frame of the Universe, out of which we cannot stir."

From this ethical concept sprang Burke's vision of Law, which he opposed ¹⁸ to Hastings' scheme of Personal Dictatorship: "Those who give and those who receive Arbitrary Power are alike criminal and there is no man but is bound to resist it to the best of his power, whenever it shall show its face in the World. It is a crime to bear it when it can be rationally shaken off. Nothing but absolute Impotence can justify men in not resisting it to the utmost of their ability.

"Law and Arbitrary Power are in eternal enmity. Name me a Magistrate, and I will name Property; name me a Power, and I will name Protection. It is a contradiction in terms; it is blasphemy in Religion; it is wickedness in Politics, to say that any man can have Arbitrary Power. In every Patent of Office the Duty is included. For what else does a Magistrate exist? To suppose for Power is an absurdity in idea. Judges are guided and governed by the eternal Laws of Justice to which we are all subject. We may bite our chains if we will, but we shall be made to know ourselves, and be taught that Man is born to be governed by Law, and he that will substitute *Will* in the place of it, is an enemy to God."

In these passages the quintessence of Burke's philosophy was contained. He repudiated absolutely the Machiavelian, "Fascist" doctrine that nations are any less accountable than are individuals to some power outside of and superior to themselves. All man-made law is an imperfect reflection of the Divine Law or "Tactic" which

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gradually reveals itself in the ordered historical evolution of civilized States. The laws of these separate States are the fruit of centuries of racial and ancestral experience ; they embody " those rules of Prudence which are formed upon the known march of the ordinary Providence of God." ¹⁹ By ignoring the eternal laws of Justice, and governing India on an arbitrary plan of his own, Hastings had broken every law of God and man—British or Indian ; Christian, Mahommedan, or Hindoo : " Mr. Hastings has no refuge here. . . . Let him fly where he will from Law to Law ; Law, I thank God, meets him everywhere, and enforced, too, by the practice of the most impious Tyrants which he quotes as if it would justify his conduct. I would as willingly have him tried by the Law of the Koran, or the Institutes of Tamerlaine, as on the Common Law or Statute Law of this Kingdom." ²⁰ So immersed a political thinker was Burke that he flung handfuls of this rare coin of the most profound political wisdom on to the floor and over the galleries of Westminster Hall. He was taken ill on the third day of his opening speech, before he had quite finished, and the Court immediately adjourned on the motion of the Prince of Wales. On this and on the last day Burke brought his argument down to the specific charges on which Hastings stood impeached. He lashed Hastings with such a torrent of abuse that half of his audience was dissolved into a series of secret and delicious shudders. Mrs. Siddons said that every illusion of the stage paled into insignificance before the realities which Burke had conjured up before her eyes : a tributary tear was observed to course its way down the iron cheek of Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor ; and Hastings himself began to succumb to the spell of that oratory and to fear lest he might be a villain indeed. The recitation of Hastings' crimes proved too much for

some of the ladies. Mrs. Sheridan had to be carried out in a faint. Burke concluded by impeaching Hastings in the name of the British People whose national character he had dishonoured ; in the name of the Peoples of India whose lands he had laid waste and desolate ; in the name and by virtue of the Eternal Laws of Justice which he had violated ; and finally in the name of Human Nature itself which he had outraged and oppressed in both Sexes, and in every age and condition of life.

Burke's four-day speech in opening the Impeachment was in many respects the most impressive which he ever delivered, and when it was finished, the process of calling evidence was begun. This business was inevitably tedious and public interest languished until June 3rd, 1788, the thirty-second day of the trial. On this day Sheridan was billed to open a four-day speech on the subject of the Begums of Oude. These ladies were as closely associated with Sheridan's fame as the Drury Lane Theatre which he managed ; the Season was at its height, and on June 3rd as much as fifty guineas ²¹ was paid for a seat in Westminster Hall. Sheridan's audience was not disappointed ; he ranted for hours, depicting Hastings as a worse criminal than Nero or Caligula : " With a long catalogue of crimes and aggravations beyond the reach of thought for human Malignity to perpetrate or human Vengeance to punish. Lower than Perdition ! Blacker than Despair ! " ²²

It was superb entertainment ; Mrs. Siddons was carried out in a faint : with an inimitable gesture the orator fell back into the arms of Burke, a fellow-Irishman, who hugged him to his breast before assisting him to a chair. An unmistakable air of theatricality had begun to inform the proceedings. Many years later, in the Autumn of 1805, when Burke was in his grave,

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Creevey was present in the Pavilion at Brighton when the Prince of Wales took Sheridan up to Hastings and introduced them. Everyone knew of the use to which Sheridan had put the troubles of the unfortunate Begums ; he had founded his reputation in politics upon the material with which they had provided him. However, " he lost no time in trying to cajole old Hastings, begging him to believe that any part he had ever taken against him was purely political, and that no-one had a greater respect for him than himself, etc., etc." ²³ Upon which old Hastings said with great gravity that it would be a consolation to him in his declining days if Sheridan would make that sentence more public. But Sheridan was obliged to mutter and get out of that engagement as best he could. As the Impeachment proceeded it soon grew evident to most of the Managers that the main difficulty was less concerned with the question of how to bring it to a successful conclusion than it was with that of bringing it to any kind of conclusion at all. Burke argued that an Impeachment was a unique judicial process to which the ordinary rules of evidence and of legal procedure did not apply. He held that the Lords were bound by nothing except the laws and customs of Parliament. Hastings' counsel contested this view, and they obtained a decision that the rules of evidence and all the technical forms of the Common Law should be observed in full. Hastings' counsel consisted of trained lawyers of great acumen who were conversant with the rules of evidence and the forms of the Common Law : the Managers of the Impeachment were Parliamentarians who were mostly ignorant of legal technique. Disputes over the admissibility of evidence were frequent and prolonged, and these wasted a great amount of time. As soon as it became clear that the Impeachment would be protracted

CAUSES OF DELAY

for years it began to be regarded as a nuisance of the first order, while the Regency Crisis, and the French Revolution, following one after the other, served to drive the Impeachment from the forefront of men's minds. No sooner was the Regency Crisis ended in the Summer of 1789 than the Judges left town to go on circuit. The Judges' attendance was regarded as essential, but during the Session of Parliament they usually had daily business to attend to elsewhere. The volume of evidence which needed to be heard was enormous, and the Peers, who were not fond of such hard work, were never in town for more than six months in every year. Moreover, even during that time they had plenty of legislative and judicial work to transact, apart from the Impeachment. For all these reasons Hastings found himself subjected to an ordeal which endured for seven years, although in each year the number of days which the Court devoted to the Trial was comparatively few. The actual distribution ²⁴ of the times of the Court's sittings was as follows :

1788 :	35 days.
1789 :	17 days.
1790 :	14 days.
1791 :	5 days.
1792 :	22 days.
1793 :	22 days.
1794 :	3 days.
1795 :	24 days.

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Total : 142 days.

Thus allowing for Sundays the Court sat in all for twenty-four weeks, which was perhaps not excessive, considering the magnitude of the issues involved. The average length of sitting each year, however, amounted

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to less than three and a half weeks, and Hastings was not alone in finding the delay almost intolerable. Burke's efforts to restrain Fox, Sheridan and others of the Committee of Managers who would have been glad, after a year or so, of a decent excuse for putting an end to the proceedings, began to impose a strain upon their personal relations. If Pitt when he voted for the Impeachment, had hoped to divert the heaviest guns of the Opposition from his own head on to that of Warren Hastings, his strategy was abundantly justified. The chivalry and tender humanity of Fox, joined to the high-souled integrity of Windham, in the end prevented either of them from abandoning publicly the battle on behalf of Indian liberties in which they had so boldly engaged. But the histrionic vanity of Sheridan was quickly exhausted, and even before the outbreak of the French Revolution he went about saying how much he longed to see Hastings fly the country with Burke howling and gesticulating at his heels.

CHAPTER NINE

The French Revolution

IN the Autumn of 1788 King George lost his wits ; this was an event of far-reaching political importance. The Prince of Wales, who was the natural claimant to the office of Regent, was hand-in-glove with Fox and certain to dismiss Pitt. The "First Gentleman in Europe" was not an attractive youth, and he was singularly ill-fitted to live on terms with his frugal, chaste, domestic, pious and unfashionable father. Like so many of the other young bloods of his day who found their lives too safe and well appointed, the Prince had sought on the gambling-tables the excitement and insecurity for which he craved. His debts, which were enormous, had recently been paid by Parliament, and it was known in certain circles that he had been legally married to a Roman Catholic lady who was some years his senior—Mrs. Fitzherbert. The King's conduct, for some months before November, 1788, had been growing increasingly eccentric. He was attacked by a species of melancholia, and at times, like Nebuchadnezzar, he developed an extraordinary appetite for grass and flowers. Charles Fox, who was travelling with his mistress in Italy, was summoned home urgently by a note from the Duke of Portland, and once more by a miraculous dispensation of Providence, the Opposition saw the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory within its grasp. During the eighteenth century, the Government's control over the majority of the House of Com-

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

mons was never so secure as it became during the century which followed. The Parliament of 1784 was a particularly "loose" Parliament, and a great many Members were liable, on occasions, to vote as they pleased. Since May, 1784, when the Opposition looked as though it had been obliterated, Pitt had sustained a series of minor but remarkable defeats. He was defeated over the Westminster Election Scrutiny, over Parliamentary Reform, and over the Government's scheme of Fortifications ; he was compelled to withdraw a proposed Coal Tax, as well as certain Irish Resolutions. Pitt was able to count, in general, upon a continuance of the support of the great boroughmongers, but the frigidity of his manners hindered him, for a long time, from binding his supporters as closely to him as the Whigs were bound to Fox. Had the King's madness continued and the Prince of Wales been installed as Regent, there is no reason to think that Fox would not have been able to manage the House of Commons, despite Pitt's majority, in the interests of the new Government which would have been formed. In Fox's absence, Sheridan approached Thurlow and persuaded him to betray Pitt, in return for a promise that he should retain the Lord Chancellorship under the Regency. Burke, in desperate straits for money, saw the Pay Office and much besides glimmering before his eyes, as a man abandoned in the desert is mocked by an oasis in a mirage. Pitt knew at once what his course of action must be. The Prince of Wales would have to be appointed Regent by Act of Parliament, but with such restrictions on the exercise of the Royal prerogatives as would secure the King from any embarrassment in the event of his recovery. Pitt knew perfectly well that the Prince would turn him out of office immediately and install the Whigs in his place ; he was already

heavily in debt, but he refused the offer of a present of a hundred thousand pounds from the City of London and prepared to practise at the Bar. Fox acted with almost incredible folly. He advanced the theory that no Act of Parliament was necessary in order to enable the Prince to assume the Regency ; he claimed that the Prince was automatically Regent already, and that it was only his exemplary moderation which prevented him from seizing the Kingly power at once. The House of Commons sat thunderstruck to hear this torrent of High Tory doctrine pouring from the lips of Fox. When Pitt introduced his Regency Bill he was opposed in the most violent fashion by the Opposition. Pitt proposed to debar the Prince from conferring Peerages, from conferring offices or pensions except during pleasure, or from disposing of the King's property. The care of the King's person and Household was to be vested in the hands of the Queen. The strain of advancing years, Hastings' trial, and above all, his financial worries, combined to make Burke more violent and ungovernable during the Regency Debates than at any other period of his life. If the Opposition had behaved quietly and sensibly, the Prince would have been installed as Regent before the end of January, 1789 ; as it was, there were inevitable delays. The King's physicians were examined at the Bar of the House, and neither Fox nor Burke would pay attention to any who declared that there was a likelihood of the King's recovery. On December 8th, 1788, Burke referred ¹ to Pitt as one of the Prince's competitors. He declared that the King's life was not safe in the hands of the physicians whom Pitt favoured, and he accused Pitt of ignoring the hereditary character of the Monarchy, and of scheming to establish a Republic ! There appeared to be no limits to his folly. On December 22nd he declared ² that the Regency Bill

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was an act of robbery and violence ; a certain composition of wax and paper was to represent the monarch :

“ I disclaim all allegiance, I renounce all obedience and loyalty to a King so chosen, and a Crown so formed. I have given my allegiance already to the House of Hanover. I worship the gods of our glorious Constitution, but I will not worship Priapus.”

This reference to Priapus was regarded as a hit at the Lord Chancellor ; for Thurlow had been convinced by Willis, the most competent of the doctors, that the King's recovery was probable. Thurlow double-crossed Fox without a qualm ; he supported Pitt's Regency Bill, and spoke feelingly in the Lords of the favours which he had received from the King : “ When I forget them,” he said “ may God forget me.” “ Forget you ! ” muttered Wilkes, who was present in the gallery. “ He'll see you damned first ! ” Burke was desperately anxious to see a new government formed on the old “ Rockingham ” principles. He objected strongly to the clause which debarred the Prince from conferring titles :

“ Suppose His Royal Highness should be disposed to revive the title of Rockingham ; would it be deemed extravagant or improper ? ”

Roars of derision greeted this indiscretion, for it was well known that the Rockingham Party was eager to see that magic name revived in the person of Fitzwilliam. Burke paused, and remarked that he knew a pack of hounds that could yelp as loud as some Honourable Members. The Opposition was engaged cheerfully, with the Prince, in formulating plans for the new administration, and Sir Gilbert Elliot, in a letter to his wife, described ^s the difficulty which they felt in select-

POSITION OF THE BURKES

ing someone for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Elliot said that Windham and he were both considered to be in the running, but that Burke would not be approved of, while Sheridan did not possess the confidence of the public. Elliot added that he had, nevertheless, discussed carefully with the Duke of Portland the steps which could be taken for Burke and his family : " The unjust prejudice and clamour which has prevailed against him and his family only determine the Duke the more to do him justice."

It was arranged that Edmund's brother should be appointed Secretary to the Treasury, at a salary of three thousand pounds a year. As Dick's tenure of this office would necessarily be precarious, it was agreed that he should exchange it for a place in the Customs, worth a thousand a year for life, as soon as a vacancy should occur. Edmund was again to be Paymaster at four thousand a year ; he was in addition to be awarded a pension of two thousand a year on the Irish Establishment for his life, with the reversion after his death of a thousand a year to his wife for her life and a thousand to his son for his life :

" The Duke's affectionate anxiety to accomplish this object," Elliot noted, " and his determination to set all clamour at defiance on this point of justice, was truly affecting." He added that Portland, like Windham and himself, felt a positive veneration for Burke. Burke in the meantime was determined that whatever happened to himself the interests of William Burke in India should not be overlooked. He accordingly made an effort,⁴ which was unsuccessful, to secure one of the four Privy Councillors' places on the Indian Board of Control. The members of the Board were unpaid until the Charter Act of 1793 and Edmund's main object can only have been to lend assistance to William's financial

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schemes, the dishonesty of which he failed so lamentably to appreciate.

On February 6th, 1789, Burke characterized ⁵ the Regency Bill as an attempt not only to degrade the Prince of Wales but to outlaw, excommunicate and attain the entire House of Brunswick. The conduct of the Ministers, Burke said, was verging on treason, and he had begun to speak of his duty to impeach the whole Cabinet when he was silenced by a great shout of "Order!" and made to apologize for his words. On another occasion Burke asked if the Ministers intended to set a crown of thorns upon the brow of the sick King, and a reed in his hand. On February 9th he gave the greatest offence by speaking ⁶ of King George as a monarch smitten by the hand of Omnipotence and hurled by the Almighty from his throne. It is possible that in a moment of great heat Burke may have discerned a conscious intent on the part of Omnipotence to oblige His Majesty's loyal Opposition; he had, however, gone too far, and there were shouts of "Take down his words!" On February 11th, Burke informed ⁷ the House that he had taken pains to make himself a master of the subject of madness; he had turned over every book upon it which he could discover and had visited many of the dreadful mansions where those unfortunate beings were confined. Burke exhausted the patience of the House by describing how some of the inmates, after a supposed recovery, had committed parricides, how others had cut up their sons or their wives, and done violence to themselves in a variety of horrible ways. Burke said that even if the King were to be pronounced cured, he would always fear for the safety of the Queen and the Prince of Wales in the event of a sudden relapse. Sir Richard Hill, the member who spoke next, gave crude but forcible expres-

sion to the bitter hostility which Burke had excited. Burke had, Sir Richard declared, in his furious defence of the British Constitution neglected to pay proper attention to his own. He suggested that a dose of salts might be the best medicine for Mr. Burke's constitution in its present heated condition. He had no desire to curb the Right Honourable's gentleman's curiosity about the insides of madhouses ; he thought indeed that it might soon be necessary for him to remain inside one for a considerable period of time. In the circumstances, he held that it might be more fitting to say nothing further in reply to Mr. Burke ; he would be content to invoke the indulgence of the House on his behalf. Sir Richard was evidently expressing the sense of the House, for he was not called to order for these remarks.

On February 19th, 1789, it was announced that the King was convalescent, and all the plans of the Opposition fell to the ground. On March 10th the King was declared to have completely recovered, and on April 23rd Pitt accompanied his Sovereign to St. Paul's in order to return thanks to Almighty God for so happy a deliverance. At that moment Burke stood at the lowest point which he was destined to touch in his career. He was a broken and discredited man of sixty, and no one could possibly have foreseen that his greatest years still lay in front of him. In the House of Commons he was desperately unpopular ; he was regarded in the country as a madman ; he was on the verge of bankruptcy ; he had no hope of office ; and an air of unreality was beginning to surround the business of the Impeachment, which looked as though it might last until Doomsday. Even to his intimates he was growing intractable. The devoted Windham noted ^s in his diary on March 12th, 1789, that Burke had turned on him suddenly while they were driving together to Carlton House in order

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to see the Prince of Wales, and had attacked him in such an exceedingly offensive manner that he was astounded. He had done no more than to express, at Burke's request, an opinion about a certain trial for murder which had taken place twenty years before.

From the miserable condition in which he stood in the Spring of 1789, Burke was rescued by two circumstances—one public, the other of an intimate, private nature. Within a few months the storm of the French Revolution arose to fill Burke's sails with the kind of wind to which they were best adapted. It enabled him to drive his vessel into the teeth of the hurricane, as a leader of the anti-Jacobin cause, of which he became the inspiration. All Europe marvelled to see the way in which Burke's great gifts were employed in this ideological contest, from the first day on which the news of the events in France reached London ; it gave him a new foundation on which to rest his fame, in place of the shaky and unpopular Impeachment. Henceforward, for as long as he lived, and for many years afterwards, the name of Burke was a force in the councils of Europe. The other circumstance, by virtue of which Burke was rescued from futility and disaster, was the intervention of Fitzwilliam, and probably of Portland also, in his private affairs. They assisted him with money in order that he might be enabled to continue his services to the public.

The Regency Crisis and the outbreak of the French Revolution diverted men's minds from the business of the Impeachment ; they were, however, powerless to affect the course of the trial. On April 19th, 1789, Burke began another four-day speech against Hastings in opening the charge of Bribery and Corruption. On the first day he accused⁹ Hastings of murdering Nun-

comar, by the hand of Sir Elijah Impey. This alleged murder was not a charge against Hastings, and Hastings' friends at once raised the matter in the House of Commons ; on May 4th, 1789, a vote of censure was passed on Burke by a majority of more than two to one. On the following day, in Westminster Hall, Burke said ¹⁰ that he could only bring himself to appear at all after what had happened because he desired to show that he was willing to make any sacrifice rather than fail in his duty to the Commons and to the nation. He withdrew the words complained of, but declared that he did so with deep regret, and against his inmost conviction. Burke suggested,¹¹ in explanation of Hastings' conduct, that Hastings' nature was unlike that of any other man who had ever lived : he was never corrupt without being cruel ; he could never dine in comfort except where he could be sure to create a famine :

“ He does not take from the loose superfluity of standing Greatness, but falls upon the indigent, the oppressed, and ruined. . . . His is unlike the generous rapacity of the noble Eagle, who preys upon a living, struggling, reluctant, equal Victim ; his is like that of the ravenous Vulture, who falls upon the decayed, the sickly, the dying, and the dead, and only anticipates Nature in the destruction of its object. His cruelty is beyond his corruption : but there is something in his Hypocrisy which is more terrible than his cruelty. . . .”

In his sty of infamy, Burke cried,¹² Hastings wallowed in the filth of his disgrace ; he fed upon the excrement of his dishonour : “ Money, he received ; the infamy he received along with it : he was glad to take his Wife with all her goods ; he took her with her full portion, with every species of infamy that belonged to her.” Hard words, these, to apply to an ex-Governor-General,

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whose name is honoured to-day as the greatest in the annals of British rule in India.

Fox had for some time been growing lukewarm in the business of the Impeachment, and after the Commons' vote of censure he strongly urged ¹³ Burke to abandon it. As early as January 2nd, 1789, Francis had reported ¹⁴ to Burke a conversation between himself and Fox, in which they had admitted "as the basis of our future proceedings, a proposition, of the truth of which, in my inmost judgment, I am not convinced, that Mr. Hastings will, at all events, be acquitted." Nothing short of a direct order from the House could have persuaded Burke to abandon the prosecution. There was in his nature a deep psychological need for some great cause to serve, some monstrous injustice to repair. Unless his enthusiasm was focussed in this way Burke's marvellous gifts became sterile and of little account. Philip Francis had early divined this, and Fox too must soon have been aware that it would have run counter to the grain of Burke's nature to allow the Impeachment to drop. It was not in Fox's nature in any circumstances to fail a friend; he had lent his name to the Impeachment and he was accordingly prepared to see it through. Nevertheless, two years later, when the friendship between Fox and Burke was at last dramatically broken upon the floor of the House of Commons, the strain caused by the long-drawn-out Impeachment was a most important, although not, of course, the ostensible cause.

Burke was advocating the cause of liberty at this time in other parts of the world besides India. On May 12th, 1789, he rose in the House to support twelve resolutions by William Wilberforce against the Slave Trade. Burke described ¹⁵ the trade as a disgrace to human nature, and he advocated its total abolition. On May 21st,

THE OLD PARISIAN FEROCITY

Burke declared that as civilization and slavery were incompatible the payment of compensation to slave-owners must be held to be inconsistent with every principle of legislation. Those who engaged in the traffic did so on the understanding that the State had the right, at any time, to withdraw its countenance from that which it had formerly protected. Burke did not usually push the principle of expediency to such lengths as this ; no man, in the ordinary course, had a higher regard for the rights of property.

On May 24th, 1789, the States-General assembled at Versailles, for the first time since 1610. The Third Estate declared itself to be the National Assembly, and, on June 20th, it swore the Oath of the Tennis Court, that it would not allow itself to be dissolved until it had given a Constitution to France. The reign of privilege seemed on the verge of being overthrown, and a spirit of measureless hope filled men's minds :

Bliss was it, in that dawn, to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven. . . .

When King Louis attempted a show of force, his people stormed the Bastille on July 14th, 1789—a day which is still celebrated as a national festival in France. The news created a profound sensation : “How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world,” wrote Fox,¹⁶ “and how much the best !” Burke’s opinion was very different ; he told ¹⁷ Lord Charlemont : “. . . The old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true that this may be no more than a sudden explosion ; if so, no indication can be taken from it ; but if it should be *character* rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty. . . .” Events moved rapidly after the fall of the Bastille. Unpopular nobles, and even Princes of the Blood, began

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to flee the country ; castles went up in flames ; rioting overspread the countryside. Lafayette assumed command of the National Guard, which sprang up everywhere to protect the Revolution. The relics of feudalism were abolished : church tithes, and the privileges of classes and corporations, were decreed out of existence. The Rights of Man were openly proclaimed ; and, on October 6th, after a grave bread riot in Paris, the Palace of Versailles was invaded by the mob, and the King and Queen were brought to Paris as virtual prisoners.

In October, 1789, Burke wrote ¹⁸ a letter to Monsieur Dupont, “ a very young gentleman ” who had visited him at Beaconsfield and in London, and who had told him that he had begun to love freedom as a result of their intercourse. Burke reminded Dupont that the freedom which he revered was founded upon justice, and that it implied legal security for life, property, activity and opinion. He was very doubtful whether a desire to achieve that kind of freedom had any place in the minds of those who were responsible for recent happenings in France.

The outbreak of the French Revolution was recognized on all sides as an event of such tremendous importance that the Impeachment of Hastings was thrust further into the background of men’s minds. Burke experienced the same difficulty in trying to induce his fellow Managers to attend to the current business of the Trial, as he had experienced, formerly, in trying to make the leaders of the Rockingham Party leave Newmarket and the Shires in order to attend to their parliamentary duties. If Hastings was not convicted, the whole value of the Impeachment must depend upon the impression which it made upon men’s minds. Burke must therefore have regarded the disturbances in France as constituting, in every way, a most unfortunate distraction :

BURKE'S VIEW OF FREEDOM

“What,” he asked ¹⁹ Philip Francis, in December, 1789, “is the conduct of our pretended friends? Put an end to the Trial! You have spun it out too long! The people are tired of it! . . . I have done with that sort of friends.” Exasperating though it might be, the French Revolution inflamed Burke’s mind to a white heat of prophetic indignation. On November 4th, 1789, the members of the Revolution Society attended church and heard the Dissenter, Price, preach a sermon in which the principles of the French Revolution were described as the fulfilment of the principles of the English Revolution of 1688. The Revolution Society met every November 4th, in order to celebrate the anniversary of the landing in England of William of Orange. It was composed mostly of Dissenters, but some Churchmen, Peers, and Members of Parliament belonged to it. Price himself was well known to be a protégé of Burke’s old enemy, Shelburne, who had recently retired from politics, and been created Marquis of Lansdowne. Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* were composed in answer to Price’s sermon; they were cast in the form of a letter to Dupont, the “very young gentleman” from France who had won Burke’s heart by his zeal for truth and liberty. Burke was occupied throughout most of the year 1790 in writing and polishing the *Reflections*, and the direction which his thoughts were taking was shown by a significant Debate in the Commons on February 9th, 1790, on the Army Estimates. Fox had criticized the proposal to increase the size of the Army. His objections, he said, were based on grounds of economy, since he felt less jealous of a standing army, now that he had seen French soldiers refusing to forget that they were citizens, and disobeying orders to fire on the mob. Fox thought that as a result of recent events France was likely to be a better neigh-

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bour than she had formerly been. Burke paid Fox many compliments for his disinterestedness and for his open and generous nature ; he took strong exception, however, to his views. The French army, he considered,²⁰ had ceased to be an army of defence ; it had become an army of irresponsible mutineers, capable of any desperate enterprise : “ The French have made their way through the destruction of their country to a bad Constitution, when they were absolutely in possession of a good one.” Burke thought that the world might have to pay, by a whole series of wars, for “ the Digest of Anarchy ” which passed under the name of the “ Rights of Man.” The example of France was a menace to civilization, and Burke declared that he would, if necessary, abandon his best friends and join his worst enemies in order to oppose any attempt to introduce French innovating principles into England.

At this point Fox rose and paid Burke a remarkable tribute. He said that such was his sense of the judgment of his Right Honourable friend, such his knowledge of his principles, such the value which he set upon them, and such the estimation in which he held his friendship that if he were to put all the political information which he had learnt from books, all which he had gained from science, and all which any knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him in one scale, and the improvement which he had derived from his Right Honourable friend’s instruction and conversation into the other, he would be at a loss to decide to which to give the preference. Fox almost wept as he uttered these words and Burke replied that a limb torn from his body could scarcely give him more pain than a breach with Fox. All might have ended happily if Sheridan had not chosen that moment to rise and attack Burke’s view of the French Revolution in all its aspects,

and with great acerbity. Sheridan was undoubtedly giving expression to a personal feeling that Burke was as much carried away by his imagination on the subject of France, as he was on that of Hastings : he had, moreover, been jealous for a long time of the fascination which Burke exercised over Fox. Sheridan had been for some time growing lax in his attention to the business of the Impeachment, and Burke had had recently to appeal to Mrs. Sheridan to use her influence in order to persuade her ²¹ husband to attend to his duties in Westminster Hall. Burke answered Sheridan's attack by breaking with him on the spot, an action which brought the danger of a split in the Whig councils appreciably closer. Every effort was subsequently made to bring about a reconciliation between Burke and Sheridan : they talked together at the Duke of Portland's, the following evening, for an hour and a half without result ; and the next night another interview lasted from ten in the evening until three in the morning. Burke declared that while he nursed no animosity against Sheridan, it would be impossible, even if a reconciliation were effected, for their former friendship to be restored. Burke was as single-minded as a crusader, and his mental temperature was habitually one degree above the normal.

The prospect of a Whig schism was not rendered any less close by the news that Burke was preparing to publish a manifesto against the authors of the French Revolution. It was known that the differences between Fox and Burke were increasing over a wide range of subjects, but Fox's followers were really astonished to hear Burke rise on March 2nd, 1789, in order to oppose a Motion by Fox for the relief of the Dissenters. Fox had moved the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts whereby Dissenters were excluded from State and

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Municipal office. In practice the grievance of the Dissenters was a sentimental one, since they were regularly relieved from the provisions of those Acts by annual Acts of Indemnity. Burke said that ²² if Fox's Motion had been mooted ten years previously he would have voted for it. As things were, however, he proposed to vote against it on the ground that the Dissenters had shown themselves to be hostile to the principle of Establishment, and had also become infected with the pernicious doctrine of abstract rights. Burke explained that in his opinion if mankind were to allow itself to search back, abstractedly, to original rights, society would cease to exist. When the House divided, Fox's Motion was negatived by a majority of nearly three to one. Burke's action in thus abandoning the cause of the Dissenters was significant ; he had previously been a consistent supporter of their cause. Many of his dearest and most familiar friends, including Abraham and Richard Shackleton of Ballitore, were members of one or other of the Dissenting Sects, but towards the close of his life Burke became increasingly prejudiced against the Dissenters as a community. He was influenced in the first instance by the way in which they had behaved towards the Coalition Government of 1783. The Dissenters at that time had been among the foremost of Burke's assailants and at the General Election of 1783 they had abandoned their traditional Whig allegiance and transferred their favours momentarily to Pitt. Burke complained ²³ bitterly of the "slaughter" which the Dissenters had then made of "the most honourable and virtuous men in the Kingdom" who were, he claimed, worthy of a better age than the one in which they lived ; he said that they had done everything which they could in order to hound him out of public life with contumely, and he never forgave them. Pitt's failure

to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts cost him the Nonconformist vote, and Fox was eager to let bygones be bygones, and to renew the time-honoured alliance between the Whig aristocracy and Dissent. Burke quarrelled violently with Fox's view. He considered that the time had come to face boldly the whole question of Dissent, and he advocated a reversal of policy towards Dissenters on the part of the State.

Burke saw that the Dissenters constituted something more than a mere religious community. They formed a cultural and to some extent a political interest of their own within the State, and they professed certain characteristic theories. The primary objective of the Dissenters was to see politics secularized, because they believed that in no other manner could their two principal ambitions be achieved. The first of these ambitions was unrestricted freedom of conscience with no civil disabilities of any kind and no privileged body like the Church of England standing in the way ; the second was the ideal of " a career open to talent," regardless of the claims of rank and property. It was impossible for Burke to accept either of these propositions, and he was fanatically opposed to the idea that politics should be secularized. In his philosophy the State was founded upon religion and derived all its authority from God. In these circumstances Burke regarded a State Church with special responsibilities as a necessity, and at the same time he held that rank and property were eminently suitable qualifications for public office since both were institutions of the State and therefore divinely sanctioned.

When Parliament failed to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts the Dissenters hardened their hearts against a State which had rejected their claims. They felt themselves to be a foreign body within the State,

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and their social unpopularity was intense. Some of the richest and most powerful Dissenters tried to pretend that they were really the cream of English Protestants, and the spiritual heirs of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In this pretence, however, they were singularly unsuccessful. To the public at large the Dissenters were never the heroes of 1688 ; they remained rather the criminals of 1649. They were generally suspect as the descendants of the miserable sectaries who with Bibles in their hands had murdered King Charles and set up an unjust dictatorship of canting Colonels :

History thy page unfold ;
Did not their sires of old
Murder the King.²⁴

The horror of that act of regicide still clung to the Dissenters, and lent a double aspect to the history of eighteenth-century Dissent. On the one side were the cultured, prosperous, “ philosophic ” Dissenters like Price and Priestley, the friends of Shelburne : on the other side were—or it was supposed that there were—the remnants of the baffled sectaries who after murdering their King, “ purging ” the House of Commons and abolishing the House of Lords, had proceeded to set up a Republic, to disestablish the Church of England and to enforce their hated rule by the naked right of the sword. Despised by great numbers of their fellow-countrymen on account of their ancestors’ misdeeds, and subjected to a few inconsiderable but irritating pin-pricks, the Dissenters constituted a permanent under-current of criticism and discontent against the State. They annoyed Burke greatly when they began to agitate for Parliamentary Reform as a means of procuring the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts : they excited his most bitter hostility when from a thousand pulpits

they began to disseminate the new French gospel of democracy. Revolution, bankruptcy and social collapse were the goals towards which from his earliest days Burke had feared that French speculation was tending, and when the Dissenters acclaimed the first rumblings of the French Revolution with an enthusiasm bordering upon frenzy ²⁶ Burke thought that his gloomiest forebodings were about to be fulfilled. He regarded the Dissenting Communities, intoxicated by the heady wine of French metaphysics, as a ferment of potential weakness, treason and disorder. He denounced Price and Priestley as spearheads of anarchy, because always behind the academic sermons and theories of "philosophic" Dissent he heard the crude challenge and extremism of the Rights of Man. Already in the dawn of the Industrial Age great masses of the people were being torn up from their traditional village pieties and transplanted into a growing number of soulless and horrible industrial towns. It was perhaps impossible to foresee—certainly Burke failed to foresee it—that this proletariat would prefer in the end to embrace Wesley's new gospel of Methodism rather than Tom Paine's doctrine of the Rights of Man. Politically John Wesley was no revolutionary, and in the storm of the French Revolution he acted, unconsciously, as a lightning-conductor. It was largely due to Wesley's preaching that the masses in England paid little heed to any of the traditional forms of Dissent and remained deaf to the dangerous doctrine of the "Levellers." While the Dissenters appealed to the heads, Wesley appealed to the hearts of his audience, and as always the emotional appeal proved stronger than the rational. It was due to Wesley that in the long run the English masses took little interest in the campaign which a large number of middle-class Dissenting idealists were conducting against the estab-

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to flee the country ; castles went up in flames ; rioting overspread the countryside. Lafayette assumed command of the National Guard, which sprang up everywhere to protect the Revolution. The relics of feudalism were abolished : church tithes, and the privileges of classes and corporations, were decreed out of existence. The Rights of Man were openly proclaimed ; and, on October 6th, after a grave bread riot in Paris, the Palace of Versailles was invaded by the mob, and the King and Queen were brought to Paris as virtual prisoners.

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The outbreak of the French Revolution was recognized on all sides as an event of such tremendous importance that the Impeachment of Hastings was thrust further into the background of men's minds. Burke experienced the same difficulty in trying to induce his fellow Managers to attend to the current business of the Trial, as he had experienced, formerly, in trying to make the leaders of the Rockingham Party leave Newmarket and the Shires in order to attend to their parliamentary duties. If Hastings was not convicted, the whole value of the Impeachment must depend upon the impression which it made upon men's minds. Burke must therefore have regarded the disturbances in France as constituting, in every way, a most unfortunate distraction :

EVERY GENTLEMAN SHOULD READ IT !

and that its authors should be regarded as the enemies of God and man.

Of all Burke's writings, the *Reflections* on the French Revolution is the greatest individual storehouse of the ripe wisdom of its author. "Read it," said George III, to all who came to see him : "It will do you good !—do you good ! Every gentleman should read it." From most of the Crowned Heads of Europe Burke received flattering testimonials of regard, and Louis XVI, deprived of his more normal pursuits, found ²⁶ a temporary solace in translating it into French. Burke declined ²⁷ to consider the Revolution in any abstract light : "Circumstances," he said " (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give, in reality, to every political principle, its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect." He considered that the French Revolution was the most astonishing event of its kind in the history of the world, and he examined it in the light of a historical sense which was almost Chinese. Burke's historical sense was so strong that it came in the end to devour almost all the rest of his principles, and so to change the first of Liberals into the first of Conservatives. Burke declared ²⁸ that the British Constitution was, in all its parts, an entailed inheritance : "This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection,—or rather the happy effect of following Nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors." He claimed ²⁹ that the science of Government was a matter for practical men, not for theorists, whose visionary schemes, "in proportion as they are metaphysically true," are "morally and politically false." This distinction which Burke drew between

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practical and theoretical truth proved particularly irritating to his opponents, but in making it he was crystalizing the experience of a life-time. Burke argued that if the theorists had their way all the decent drapery of life would disappear, all the pleasing illusions which make power gentle and obedience liberal would be dissolved. This "decent drapery" included amongst much else the respect which civilized men had long been accustomed to pay to rank and women :

"It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles ; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning star, full of life and splendour and joy. Oh ! What a revolution ! And what an heart must I have to contemplate, without emotion, that elevation and that fall ! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she could ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom ! Little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor and of cavaliers ! I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded ; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted

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freedom ! The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone ! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness ! ” ³⁰

This passage marks almost such a landmark in English prose as the publication by Wordsworth and Coleridge of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1797 is generally said to do in our poetry : the Romantic Movement in English literature had begun. Burke's style reached back to the great writers of the seventeenth century for its richness and colour : for its matter it looked forward to the century which lay ahead, and asserted the claim of the emotional and subconscious elements of man's mind, against Nature, Reason, and all the dominant ideas of the eighteenth century : “ Who now reads Bolingbroke ? ” Burke asked. “ Who ever read him through ? ” What is the use of the whole clan of the “ enlightened ” among us ? The literary Cabal had, some years before, formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion,³¹ and many people were now actively engaged in importing the principles of French atheism and enlightenment into England. These “ smugglers of adulterated metaphysics ” ³² had forgotten that the basis of the State and the source of all comfort and all good was religion :

“ He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue willed also the necessary means of its perfection : He willed, therefore, the State.” ³³ The State, accordingly, became “ a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all

perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be attained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures each in their appointed place." This pre-ordained connection of the State with "the source and original archetype of all perfection" was part of the divine plan to prevent any "unprincipled facility of changing the State as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions." Under such conditions "the whole chain and continuity of the Commonwealth would be broken; no one generation could link with another; men would become little better than the flies of a summer."

This was, in fact, one of the major articles in Burke's indictment of the French Revolution. The French had ruthlessly dug up their old foundations, instead of building upon them. In such conditions, no security could have any place, and minorities in particular would be very liable to suffer persecution: "Under a cruel prince they have the balmy compassion of mankind to assuage the smart of their wounds; they have the plaudits of the people to animate their generous constancy under their sufferings: but those who are subjected to wrong under multitudes are deprived of all external consolation; they seem deserted by mankind, overpowered by a conspiracy of their whole species."⁸⁴ In the fluctuation of all kinds of authority, a grave

danger existed that some popular general might arise, who understood the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possessed the true spirit of command. As soon as the armies should begin to obey such a man, on his personal account—this man “is your master,—the master (that is little) of your King, the master of your Assembly, the master of your whole Republic.”³⁵

It was characteristic of Burke that he should have foretold the emergence of a military dictatorship from the maelstrom of contending forces in France. Burke had originally intended to publish his *Reflections* in the Spring, instead of in the Autumn of 1790, but he was tempted to expand and revise the work throughout the Spring and Summer. Early in February, 1790, Philip Francis was shown a draft of the first state of the work, and he advised Burke³⁶ that it was beneath his dignity as a Privy Councillor to enter into a war of pamphlets with Dr. Price. Francis was no romantic; he said: “In my opinion, all that you say of the Queen is pure foppery. If she be a pure female character, you ought to take your ground upon her virtues. If she be the reverse, it is ridiculous, in any but a lover, to place her personal charms in opposition to her crimes. . . . Pray, Sir, how long have you felt yourself so desperately disposed to admire the ladies of Germany?” This remark was characteristic of Francis. His mind was cold, coarse and bracing, like a winter’s day, but it was subject to frequent storms of jealousy. He envied Burke’s mastery of the English tongue, but he had no understanding of the sense of history by which Burke’s thought was informed. He wrote³⁷ to Burke again, immediately the book was published: “Once for all I wish you would let me teach you to write English.” Burke was seriously annoyed at Francis’s criticism, and his son somewhat officiously wrote to Francis to remon-

strate : Edmund dashed into the fray himself, and indignantly demanded ³⁸ :

“ What !—Are not high rank, great splendour of descent, great personal elegance, and outward accomplishments, ingredients of moment in forming the interest we take in the misfortunes of men ? The minds of those who do not feel thus are not even systematically right. . . . I tell you again, that the recollection of the manner in which I saw the Queen of France in the year 1773, and the contrast between that brilliancy, splendour, and beauty with the prostrate homage of a nation to her—and the abominable scene of 1789 which I was describing—*did* draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes, almost as often as I looked at the description. You do not believe this fact, nor that these are my real feelings ; but that the whole is affected, and, as you express it, downright foppery. My friend—I tell you it is truth ; and that it is true, and will be truth when you and I are no more ; and will exist as long as men with their natural feelings shall exist.”

Burke was in the right : Johnson was dead ; the rule of the coffee-house was ended ; soon the horns of elfland would be heard once more in the woods and gardens of England. Magic casements were opening ; the woods of Westermains beckoned. Walter Scott, a lad of eighteen, was working and dreaming in the shadow of the acropolis at Edinburgh.

CHAPTER TEN

The Anti-Jacobin Cause

THE publication of Burke's *Reflections* served to crystallize the cleavage in English and European opinion, on the subject of the French Revolution. On the one side were those who saw a new Heaven and a new Earth opening before the eyes of mankind ; on the other were those who believed with Burke that French metaphysics threatened "to burst like a Levanter, to sweep the earth with their hurricane, and to break up the fountains of the great deep to overwhelm us!"¹ In Burke's eyes the French Jacobins, having displaced Law by Arbitrary Power, and set up Might in place of Right, now threatened to overturn the ancient, concrete liberties of Englishmen in favour of the newfangled Gospel of the Rights of Man. Burke compared the effects of the French Revolution to those of the Reformation : "*It is a Revolution of doctrine and theoretic dogma.* It has a much greater resemblance to those changes which have been made upon religious grounds, in which a spirit of proselytism makes an essential part."² Burke spoke³ feelingly in the *Reflections* about the fate of learning, cast into the mire, along with its natural protectors and guardians, to be trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude. This passage was eagerly seized upon by Burke's opponents, and "The Reply of the Swinish Multitude to Mr. Edmund Burke" was only one of about forty replies, which appeared after the publication of the *Reflections*. The best remembered

of these replies is Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*, the first part of which appeared early in 1792. Paine remarked of Burke's description of Marie Antoinette that he was not affected by the reality of distress, but by the shadowy resemblance of it striking his imagination: he "pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird." There was some substance in the charge that Burke took less account than he might have done of the heavy burden under which the masses of the French people had for years been groaning. This was due to his ineradicable conviction "that the awful Author of our being is the Author of our place in the order of existence, —and that, having disposed and marshalled us by a Divine Tactic, not according to our will, but according to His, He has, in and by that disposition, virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the place assigned to us." ⁴ In this connection Burke was a realist although his passionate humanitarianism was never in question. He was uttering no empty words when he declared ⁵ in 1781, in the course of a Debate on the Repeal of the Marriage Act: "When, indeed, the smallest rights of the poorest people in the Kingdom are in question, I would set my face against any act of pride and power countenanced by the highest that are in it; and if it should come to the last extremity, and to a contest of blood—God forbid! God forbid!—my part is taken: I would take my fate with the poor, and low, and feeble." Eleven years later Burke expanded this argument by explaining ⁶ that the poorest and most ill-informed creatures on the earth are the best judges of a "practical" oppression because, while they are not over-sensitive they usually feel the worst effects of it. For the purpose, however, of finding the real cause of any act of oppression as well as for that of deciding upon the appropriate remedy, it is futile to call the

victims into consultation. It is futile because their passions are ungoverned, because their reasons are weak and because further the smallness of the property which individually they possess is liable to make them reckless of the consequences of their actions. Burke's sensibility to human suffering was opposed, very noticeably, to the political mysticism which he professed. He looked to the past in order to discover in it "the rules of Prudence which are formed upon the known march of the ordinary Providence of God."⁷ It is because the mass of the people is irrational, uninformed, passionate and engaged, of necessity, in menial and degrading pursuits that, in the first instance, it is most extraordinarily difficult to form "a number of vague, loose individuals into a mass which has a true Politic Personality."⁸ In these circumstances the "discipline of Nature" has evolved "a true natural Aristocracy" to form "the leading, guiding and governing part" of the State. This natural Aristocracy acts as the trustee of the people: "When the poor rise to destroy the rich, they act as wisely for their own purposes as when they burn mills, and throw corn into the river, to make bread cheap."⁹ The Aristocracy is to the State, as the soul is to the body. It is not a mere separate interest in the State, nor can it be in any way separated from it. Burke would, therefore, in a sense have excluded from the organic unity of his State the unenfranchised mass of his fellow-countrymen; he regarded this mass, however, as united in a common patriotism with the governing Aristocracy. The supreme end of Government is the happiness of all, but that happiness is dependent upon the conservation of "prescriptive" rights. Prescription was, in Burke's view, one of the first principles of "Natural Justice," and an essential ingredient in the formation of States: "It is possible that many estates about you were

PREScription

obtained by arms ; . . . but it is old violence ; and that which might be wrong in the beginning is consecrated by time and becomes lawful.”¹⁰ Burke’s absolute refusal to peer behind the veil of this mysterious “Prescription” was one of the fundamental principles of his political philosophy. To call Prescription into question would involve a species of sacrilege which might bring all settled government into contempt in Ireland, in England, in India, and throughout the world. The unpropertied mass of the people must remain content with “Virtual Representation,” under which “there is a communion of interests, and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of people and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them. This is Virtual Representation. Such a Representation I think to be in many cases even better than the actual. It possesses most of its advantages, and is free from many of its inconveniences. . . .”¹¹ The levelling principles of the Jacobins, which did not stop short at the frontiers of France, threatened to dissolve all “Politic Personalities” into a series of anarchical whirlpools of force, usurpation and fraud. This was the source of Burke’s fierce sentiment of hostility to the French philosophers, who had thrown off all fear of God and man. They laughed at Burke’s faith in a divine plan :

“Nothing can be conceived more hard,” Burke declared,¹² “than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the Principle of Evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defecated evil.”

We were at war with an armed doctrine, and as the

crimes committed by the Jacobins multiplied, and Burke drew nearer to the grave, his denunciations grew more and more unmeasured : they rang with the fury of an Old Testament prophet : " The Revolution Harpies of France, sprung from Night and Hell, or from that chaotic Anarchy which generates equivocally all monstrous, all prodigious things, cuckoo-like, adulterously lay their eggs and brood over, and hatch them in the nest of every neighbouring State. These obscene Harpies who deck themselves in I know not what divine attributes, but who, in reality, are foul and ravenous birds of prey (both mothers and daughters), flutter over our heads and souse down upon our tables, and leave nothing unrent, unrifled, unravaged, or unpolluted with the slime of their filthy offal." ¹³ It was impossible that the new system of robbery in France could be rendered safe by any art. France *must* be destroyed, or her principles would destroy all Europe.¹⁴ Burke described ¹⁵ France as the " Cannibal Republic," inhabited by villains " whose maxims poison more than the exhalations of the most deadly fens, and who turn all the fertilities of Nature and of Art into an howling desert."

He declared ¹⁶ again : " Good taste, manners, morals, religion, all fly, wherever the principles of Jacobinism enter, and we have no safety against them, but in arms." Burke was unfortunate in one respect in the age in which he lived : he built his thought into a framework of law, custom and morals which was on the eve of being radically transformed. At that time the Industrial Revolution was in its infancy, and no one could foresee the extent and significance of the change which had been inaugurated in the texture of men's thought, and of their lives. As a result of the Revolution brought about by the improvement in communications, and the

application of science to industry, the social framework, after Burke's death, began increasingly to take on the appearance of a series of dissolving views. The fruits of modern capitalism helped gradually to resolve much of the former political incapacity of the masses, and for the first time in history the "people" began not merely to exist but to live. During the Middle Ages and for a long time afterwards, art and civilization were the prerogative of the few. If they are to continue to exist during the Industrial Ages which lie ahead, they will do so as the prerogative of the many. It would be absurd to blame Burke because even his prophetic insight failed to appreciate the significance of a movement which, at the time of his death, had barely begun: even to-day, nearly one and a half centuries later, it is probably still in its first crude beginnings. Burke erected the fabric of his political thought on a social foundation which he believed to be more or less permanent, although he must have known that, in the course of centuries, it had been subject to imperceptible modification: that static social foundation was found during the nineteenth century to be by far the most dynamic that had ever been seen. Burke's political testament, therefore, whilst it remains unrivalled as a school of statesmanship, was as a working system virtually still-born.¹⁷

Burke cannot be blamed because he failed to foresee the effects of the Industrial Revolution; but there is one respect in which his thought does show some trace of obscurantism and inconsistency. Despite his unfaltering faith in a "Divine Tactic" controlling the lives of men and nations,—despite his splendid vision of the Constitution as an organic unity, transmitted down the ages by the toil of successive generations, and linked with the dead, the living and the unborn by an indis-

soluble bond, Burke's faith seemed to falter when he peered into the future. The Divine Wisdom had accomplished miracles in the past : why should it not, in the future, be competent successfully to effect further modifications both in the structure and in the functions of the Constitution ? This is a question which Burke never squarely faced. Perhaps his mind had been attuned to pessimism by his early familiarity with the effects of mis-government in Ireland ; he was convinced that nothing was more likely to interfere with the operation of the " Divine Tactic " than the sinful nature of man : " I hoped," he told ¹⁸ William Elliot on May 26th, 1795, " to see the surest of all reforms, perhaps the only sure reform—the ceasing to do ill." It is true that Burke did not, in the last resort, exclude the necessity of reform, and even of revolution, applied as " the supreme medicine of the Constitution " ¹⁹ when ancient, concrete liberties were challenged by tyranny, in any shape. No one took more pride than he in the expulsion of the Stuarts, and the " Glorious " Revolution of 1688. At the height of his anti-Jacobin frenzy Burke praised the last-minute reform of the Constitution of Poland ; and at the end of his life he was still urging the necessity for administrative reform in Ireland. However, it has to be admitted that Burke expected rather too much from the human element in the Constitution which his imagination envisaged. It was not entirely just to the French peasantry to proclaim ²⁰ that : " In the long series of ages which have furnished the matter of history, never was so beautiful and so august a spectacle presented to the moral eye as Europe afforded the day before the Revolution in France." Though he declared more than once that " Commonwealths are not physical but moral essences," his political mysticism did occasionally blur the edges of his vision. The air which he

habitually breathed came to him somewhat rarefied : it was tonic from the heights about which his imagination delighted to play. He cherished in his heart the image of the Constitution of Britain : “ the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of that ancient Law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a Fortress at once, and a Temple ” standing “ inviolate on the brow of the British Sion. . . . ” ²¹ He envisaged the British Monarchy “ like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers.” He envisaged “ Our Sovereign Lord, the King, and his faithful subjects, the Lords and Commons of this Realm—the triple cord which no man can break,—the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of this nation,—the firm guaranties of each other’s being and each other’s rights,—the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind, and every quality of property and of dignity. . . . ”

But Burke’s spectacles were not made to an universal prescription. He expected too much from every species of man or institution with which he entered into any kind of relation. He asked too much of the swinish multitude ; he asked too much of the Hastings Trial ; he asked too much of the Rockingham Party, which he drove until finally he shattered it in pieces. Of all the statesmen of his age, Burke was probably the most deficient in the commonplace arts of political management and address.

The *Reflections on the French Revolution* contain the literary inspiration of modern Conservatism : when they were published, they split the Whig party from top to bottom. While Burke was beginning to preach the anti-Jacobin crusade, his friend, Charles Fox, was

moving steadily in the direction of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Fox enlisted the support of the Dissenters ; he toyed with the Rights of Man ; once Burke's guiding hand was removed he left the solid earth behind him. Taking with him a gay cavalcade of irresponsible young aristocrats, Fox flung the old Whig principles to the winds of Heaven. At Brooks's, and in the large and pleasant country-houses of his followers, whose devotion to himself was absolute and personal, he drank the thin air of Jacobinism. It was in a fortunate hour for England that Fox's eccentricity stood revealed. Without Fox it is likely that all the Whigs would ultimately have followed Burke into the Tory camp. In that event the historical link between the Whig party and nineteenth-century Liberalism would have been severed, and it is probable that in place of the Reform Act of 1832 there would have been a bloody revolution. Pitt's policy was midway between that of Fox and Burke. He hoped to steer clear of the storm which had arisen upon the continent and he thought that by turning his back on Europe he would be able to keep England out of war. In pursuit of this policy he pushed neutrality to the extreme limit and ignored the provocative language of Jacobins and anti-Jacobins alike.

The record of Burke's domestic life during this stormy period is not very full. He lost his only sister, Juliana French, in January, 1790. He had not seen her for a great many years, but, with characteristic generosity, he opened his doors at once to receive her only daughter, Mary, who came to reside permanently at Beaconsfield. Mrs. French was a widow, and her circumstances had been straitened as a result of some unfortunate building speculations of her husband. Her daughter made a somewhat bizarre addition to the family circle at Butler's Court. Fanny Burney described ²² her as a wild Irish

girl, handsome and very pushing, who spoke with a prodigious brogue, and spluttered at every word from excess of eagerness. In May, 1790, Burke received the unique honour of being elected an honorary member of the Royal Irish Academy. The rule against the election of honorary members was specially waived in his favour, and not one had previously been elected.²³ In December, 1790, after the publication of the *Reflections*, Trinity College, Dublin, made him an honorary LL.D., and presented him with an address in a golden casket. An attempt was made to confer a similar honour upon him at Oxford, but it was feared ²⁴ that Convocation would not be unanimous. Burke had to be content, therefore, with an address from the resident graduates, which was transmitted to him through his friend, Windham. In his reply Burke expressed ²⁵ his determination to continue to wage, in the West as in the East "under the standard of the Captain of our Salvation, a war without quarter upon all cruelty, and oppression, wherever they appear, in whatever shape, and in whatever descriptions of men."

Parliament was dissolved in November, 1790, and Pitt's hold upon the country was increased at the ensuing General Election. The friends of Hastings tried to take advantage of the Dissolution to put an end to the Trial, by maintaining that an impeachment was automatically abated when Parliament was dissolved. The House, however, decided that the Impeachment should continue, and on February 14th, 1791, the number of the Articles was cut down from twenty-two to four, in order the better to secure speedy and substantial justice. These four Articles related to Hastings' treatment of the Rajah of Benares, and of the Begums of Oude, to the Fraudulent Sale of Contracts and to the Acceptance of Bribes. Burke, in moving the limiting Resolution, took

Erskine to task for having complained of the length of the trial. He sharply remarked ²⁶ that a *Nisi Prius* lawyer was no more fitted "to ascertain what ought to be the proper length of an Impeachment than a rabbit, which breeds six times a year, is capable of judging of the time of gestation of an elephant."

Burke said that he had always considered that the Trial might last three years, but he felt now that the lawyers were largely to blame for the delays which had occurred. He had, he said, such a veneration for the Law as almost amounted to idolatry ; he had not quite the same feeling in regard to those who practised the profession. Their confined and narrow mode of thinking, added to their prejudices, made them enemies to all impeachments ; they regarded them as an encroachment on the regular line of practice of the Courts below. They had been intentionally obstructive during the present Trial, and he took leave to remind them that England was governed not by lawyers, but by Law.

In January, 1791, Burke published his *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*. In this work he denounced Rousseau, whose proceedings, he said, he had had good opportunities of knowing, almost from day to day, when Rousseau was in England in 1766. Burke had already begun to sound the tocsin, and call for a crusade :

"Never shall I think any country in Europe to be secure whilst there is established in the very centre of it a State (if so it may be called) founded on principles of anarchy, and which is in reality a College of Armed Fanatics for the propagation of the principles of assassination, robbery, rebellion, fraud, faction, oppression, and impiety." ²⁷

Burke gave the plainest possible expression ²⁸ to the

I MUST SEE THE THINGS : I MUST SEE THE MEN !

empiricism on which his thought was secured : “ I must see with my own eyes ; I must in a manner touch with my own hands, not only the fixed, but the momentary circumstances, before I could venture to suggest any political project whatsoever . . . I must see the things : I must see the men.”

It was absurd to think of “ making men ” to fit paper Constitutions—to talk of “ binding Nature ” to human designs. Burke doubted very much whether the French were ripe for liberty on any standard : “ It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.”

Charles Fox openly expressed his disapproval of the *Reflections* and of the *Letter*. A Debate begun in the Commons on April 15th, 1791, which arose out of the seizure, by Catherine of Russia, of Otchakoff, on the Black Sea. This place was a fortress which was said to be the key to Constantinople, and at about three o'clock in the morning Fox rounded off the Debate with a sudden fatuous panegyric on the French Revolution. He said ²⁹ that the new French Constitution was “ the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country.” Burke rose at once, in a state of visible agitation, but he was silenced by a loud and concerted clamour. Fox always regretted ³⁰ that Burke was prevented from replying at once, on the ground that his anger would not then have been bottled up, and permitted to ferment for a period of three weeks. From that time everybody knew that an open break between Burke and Fox was probable and several well-meant but ineffective attempts were made to avert it, in order to save the Whig Party from possible disruption. Burke was inflexibly resolved to bring the merits of

Fox's panegyric to trial in the place in which it was delivered. On April 21st, 1791, it had been arranged that the House should go into committee on the Quebec Government Bill ; it was clear that in connection with a Bill for the better government of a French-speaking province the question of the merits of the new French Constitution would be sufficiently relevant. On the morning of April 21st, Fox called at Burke's house in Duke Street, St. James's, and asked Burke not to raise the subject of their difference on the committee stage of the Quebec Bill. Burke refused this request, but the two friends, after a discussion of their differences, walked down, for the last time together, in a tolerably friendly manner to Westminster. On arrival they found that Sheridan had successfully moved the postponement of the debate, but Burke gave formal notice that he intended to answer Fox's challenge on May 6th, which was the new date fixed for the committee stage on the Quebec Bill. When Burke's intention had thus been dramatically announced, public expectation grew big with the event. On May 6th, 1791, as soon as the usual question, that the Bill be read, was put, Burke rose and began his speech. He declared ³¹ that England held French Canada by right of conquest confirmed by treaty cession, and by thirty years' possession. Under the Law of Nations, this country was bound to afford the people of Canada an equitable Government which they, on their part, were equally bound to accept. It would not be "equitable Government" if we were to permit the devil's cargo of the Rights of Man to be imported into Canada. Since these "Rights" had been preached in the French West Indies, Hell itself had yawned. Blacks had risen against whites : whites against blacks. All subordination was destroyed : the bonds of society were torn asunder ; and every man seemed to thirst

THE LITTLE DOGS BARKED

for his neighbour's property, and his neighbour's blood :

Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and grey,
Mingle, mingle, mingle.

In eloquent terms Burke was proceeding to describe the indignities to which the unfortunate King of France was at that moment being subjected, when he was interrupted on a point of Order. From that time he was continuously interrupted on points of Order in a systematic and concerted manner. Fox's followers rose one after another, and Burke, in an agony of rage, hurled ³² at them the words of the maddened Lear :

. . . The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me !

Finally Fox himself rose, and declared that the French Revolution was one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind. He complained that Burke had come down to the House, not to debate the clauses of the particular Bill which was then before the Committee, but to ventilate a private quarrel of his own. He said that Burke himself had taught him that no revolt of any nation ever took place without provocation. The "Rights of Man," which Burke ridiculed, were the foundation of every rational Constitution, including our own. Why else had Burke and he rejoiced together at every success gained by Washington during the War of American Independence ? Now the people of France had risen, as the Americans had risen before them. Why should Burke support the cause of liberty in the one case and not in the other ? Why should he now seek to draw up an indictment against an entire people ? Why should he have endeavoured to limit the power of

the English Crown in 1780, if he now resisted all attempts to pare the claws of a Bourbon tyrant? Fox added that he might have said rather more than he intended, but that he felt strongly on the subject.

At hearing his own words and actions publicly twisted in this tendentious manner by a man with whom he had been intimate for nearly a quarter of a century, Burke's indignation reached boiling-point. He had for a long time disliked most of Fox's train of gilded youths, the Greys, the Grenvilles, the Pelhams, the Fitzpatricks, the Cokes, the Lambtons, whose ways of life were so different from his own. They, on their side, had never attempted to conceal the ignorant contempt with which they regarded Burke, whom they were always glad of an opportunity of baiting. At Brooks's, the social headquarters of the Whigs, Burke never touched a card: he left nothing behind him there except twelve years' accumulated arrears of subscription which were outstanding at his death.³³ He was no gambler: he was no sportsman. He neither hunted nor shot: he cared nothing for the turf. He was an Irish upstart from the Catholic underworld across the Bristol Channel who had taken insufficient pains to accommodate himself to English ways and to manage English opinion. His speeches were mercilessly long: his brogue was teasing: his gestures ungainly: his voice harsh: his delivery indifferent. His zeal was offensive and unnatural: his manner violent almost to madness. Even his vaunted disinterestedness was probably hypocrisy. Had he not once been the paid Agent of the Colony of New York? Was he not known to have jobbed in the Funds? Were there not ugly rumours in circulation regarding his brother, and his cousin, whom he so much adored? He had bored the whole country with the politics of India, and he had now challenged Fox, the darling of the

Whigs, and the best of good fellows, on the subject of the internal affairs of France. What the French chose to do within their own borders was no concern of England, and it was intolerable that England should now be dragged into another European War in order to suit one of the latest of Burke's whims.

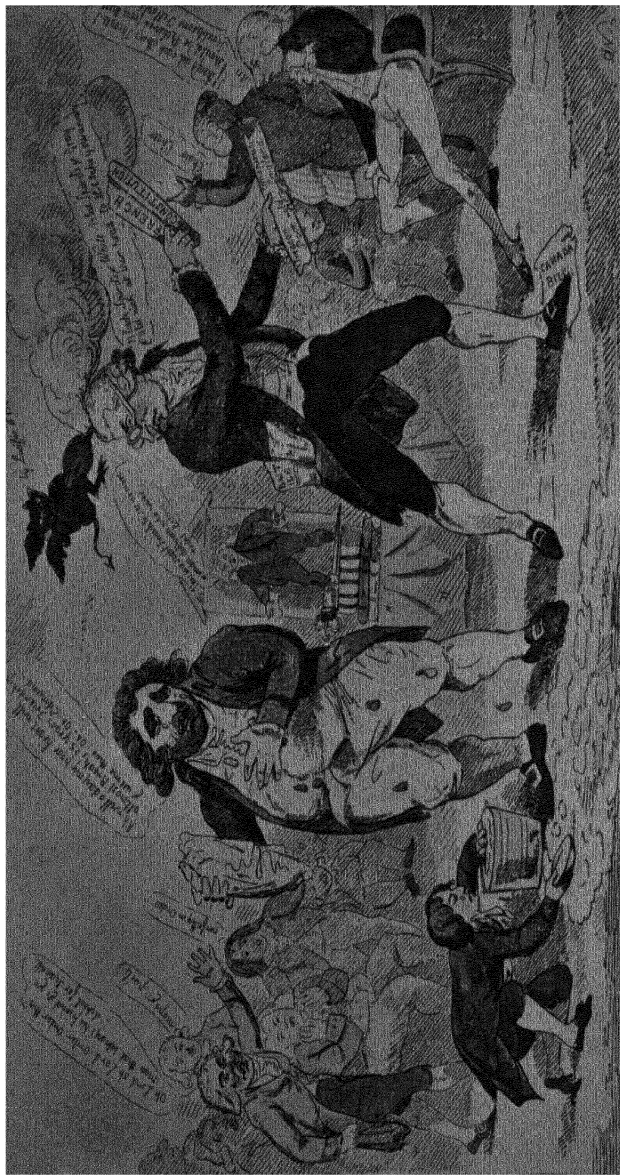
The friendship between Burke and Fox had been one of the wonders of the age, and has left its mark on English history. But it was essentially a political and intellectual friendship: it was often remarked that it appeared to begin and end at the entrance to the House of Commons. With splendid loyalty Burke had been content to see Fox, who was twenty years his junior, preferred over his head. Now it seemed as though the Party which he had served so long, so faithfully, and so unprofitably, was about to disown him altogether and to strip him of the remnants of his reputation. His opinions were thrown back into his face, tortured into lying shapes and perilous misrepresentations. His grey hairs were derided, and he was about to be driven in dishonour from a field on which he had battled all his life. Windham noted ³⁴ in his diary on November 7th, 1790, that the author of the *Reflections* might have been expected to be "called to the Government of his Country by the combined voice of every man in it. What shall be said of the state of things when it is remembered that the writer is a man decried, persecuted and proscribed; not being much valued, even by his own Party, and by half the nation considered little better than an ingenious madman?"

By God, it was too much! England must at any cost be awakened from her false security. The French Revolution was no mere domestic concern of the French people: it was a plague worse than the Black Death which threatened to sweep the world. Already the

first symptoms of infection had appeared in England, and Burke felt himself inspired to stand forth once again as the champion of the liberties of Englishmen. When he rose to answer Fox, Burke began soberly and coolly, but most of the time he was speaking at white heat. At one point he turned to the astonished Chairman of Committees and exclaimed : “ I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness.” Burke complained that Fox had been heard with perfect composure by the whole House, whereas he himself was always being interrupted and called to order. He repudiated the charge of inconsistency : he had fought tyranny at home and in America : he would now fight it in France. The fact that in 1780 he had desired to limit the influence of the English Crown did not mean that he now wished to see that of the French Crown reduced to nothing. He had taken the side of the Americans because he had supposed them to be fighting not for speculative rights with a universal propagandist appeal, but for specific constitutional liberties which were the birthright of every Englishman. He declared that the supreme object of his life had been, and always would be, the defence of the constitutional liberties of Britain. He cited instances in which he had differed from Fox in former years, and said that those differences had never threatened their friendship :

“ It certainly is indiscretion, at any period, but especially at my time of life, to provoke enemies, or to give my friends occasion to desert me ; yet if by a firm and steady adherence to the British Constitution I am placed in such a dilemma I will risk all ; and as public duty and public prudence instruct me, with my last words exclaim—‘ Fly from the French Revolution ! ’ ”

At that point Fox leant across and whispered audibly :



Burke renouncing Fox's friendship

“There is no loss of friends.”

“I am sorry,” Burke replied in a loud voice, “but there is. I know the price of my conduct. I have done my duty at the price of my friend: our friendship is at an end.”

The House was hushed, while Burke concluded with a rapturous peroration in the course of which Fox and Pitt were pictured moving across the face of the Heavens like two flaming meteors, while the British Constitution glowed like a fixed star, and the arm of the Almighty flung comets from their courses.

When Fox rose it was some minutes before he was able to speak: “Tears trickled down his cheeks, and he strove in vain to give utterance to feelings that dignified and exalted his nature.”³⁵ There was scarcely a dry eye in the House: Englishmen in the eighteenth century were not ashamed to show their feelings. No Arnold had yet arisen to turn the public schools into nurseries of Spartan self-control. The ideal of friendship was deeply revered in that age, and Fox referred in moving terms to the favours which he had received from Burke while he was still almost a boy; to the manner in which time had ripened their friendship; and to the familiar intimacy in which, for twenty years at least, they had lived:

“Nothing but the ignominious terms which my Right Honourable friend has heaped on me——”

Here Burke interposed to say that he did not recollect any.

“My Right Honourable friend does not recollect the epithets,” Fox eagerly exclaimed: “they are out of his mind; then they are completely and for ever out of mine. I cannot cherish a recollection so painful and from this moment they are obliterated and forgotten.”

Unfortunately Fox, who possessed a genius for debate,

was quite unable to resist the temptation of attacking Burke by the unfair method of quoting from his printed speeches and writings, and giving to the selected contexts a garbled and even opposite meaning from that which they had originally borne. He did more : he even repeated some of the expressions used by Burke in his unguarded and convivial moments ; he called them up in the shape of accusations and with a serious meaning attached to them which they were never intended to bear. In the light of such conduct Fox's olive-branch withered in his hands. Burke demanded whether his most inveterate enemy could have acted more unkindly towards him. The Debate was closed without any reconciliation, and Burke and Fox were thenceforward divided for ever. The conduct of their quarrel was arranged in the grand manner ; when they met subsequently in the Managers' Box at Hastings' Trial, or in the lobbies of the House of Commons, they exchanged the formal courtesies of strangers.

For a year after his break with Fox, Burke stood practically alone. He made no overt approach to the Ministerialists and he was repudiated by his own Party. By a strange irony, the man who had been the most consistent exponent of the necessity for Party Government was now left himself without any Party at all. On May 12th, 1791, the *Morning Chronicle*, which was regarded as Fox's organ, came out with the statement that " the great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is that Mr. Burke retires from Parliament."

Burke, who had no intention of retiring from Parlia-

ment until the Impeachment was concluded, regarded ³⁶ this announcement as a public condemnation which set a brand upon his name : he resented it bitterly, and brooded upon it. On May 15th, 1791, even Windham noted ³⁷ in his diary that he had excused himself from dining with Lord Petre, from fear that he might meet Burke. When he was told that Burke was not expected, he went. Burke refused to bow before the storm, but some months passed before many of his most intimate personal and political friendships began to recover from the shock of the Debate on the Committee stage of the Quebec Bill on May 6th, 1791 : " I am not well," Burke told the Speaker on one occasion during those trying months ; " I eat too much : I drink too much : I sleep very little." The circumstances which contributed most to his gradual rehabilitation with the great majority of the Whigs was the remarkable way in which the development of events in France began to bear out his terrible prognostications. On June 21st, 1791, the King and Queen, who had already been turned back once by the mob when they drove out of St. Cloud in order to make their Easter Communion, were stopped at Varennes in full flight towards the frontier. From that moment it was clear that the monarchy was doomed. In August, the Emperor Leopold of Austria, alarmed for the safety of his sister, Marie Antoinette, issued a declaration from Pilnitz, in conjunction with the King of Prussia, in which France seemed to be threatened with foreign intervention if she failed to restore her Sovereign to the status to which he was entitled.

In the meantime, Burke, in the embarrassing situation in which he was temporarily placed, was treated with the utmost consideration by Fitzwilliam and Portland, although both of them, so long as any possibility remained of avoiding a Whig schism, adhered

THE ANTI-JACOBIN CAUSE

officially to Fox. Fitzwilliam tried to insist that the pecuniary assistance which Burke had formerly received should be continued, despite the break which had occurred. Burke found himself unable to agree. He told* Fitzwilliam that while in ordinary circumstances he would have been very willing to owe the repose of his declining years to Fitzwilliam's kindness, it was now impossible for him to do so :

“ Instead of being suffered to retire with credit, and with a kind acknowledgment of service, my retreat has been imperiously ordered. An attempt has been made by that Party (in which I had acted, I am sure, with zeal, and I think with judgment, to the hour of my public condemnation) to affix an eternal stigma to my good name, so far as it was in their power to brand me. In that situation I appeal to the equity and candour, inseparable from your nature, to judge whether thus *publicly* condemned, I can continue to receive privately a favour of any kind from one of the chiefs of the Party which has thought proper, uncontradicted by anyone from that day to this, to describe me in the manner in which I have been described.”

Burke complained that the principles which the Whig leaders were at that time so foolishly engaged in propagating, had for their great object not so much the destruction of all absolute monarchies, as the total elimination of “ that thing called an aristocrat, or nobleman and gentleman.” The opinions favoured by Fox could have no other effect “ than to root out all principles from the minds of the common people, and to put a dagger into the hands of every rustick, to plunge into the heart of his landlord.” Burke complained that the Party had for years nourished the “ trivial ” ambition of driving

* See Appendix 5.

LARGE PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE

him out of the public service, with obloquy. Now that that object had been achieved, the Party might become a little more cool and guarded, but he saw no indication of any change of outlook in regard to France. In these circumstances Burke explained the course of action which he had decided to adopt. The borough of Malton, which he represented in Parliament, was in the gift of Fitzwilliam. He regretted that he was unable to resign his seat, on account of his engagement to the public in the matter of Hastings' Trial. He could not continue to act as the Chief Manager of the Impeachment, on behalf of the Commons, unless he possessed a seat in the Commons. Burke said that he was certainly more anxious to retire from Parliament than his enemies were to see him go, and that for so long as he remained in the House, he was resolved to take no active part in politics at all unless he was challenged on the subject of France :

“ In this situation surely your Lordship does not think it would become me, when, before the Session is three days old, I may be called to speak strong things against those whom you honour with your confidence and regard, or when, from the depths of my retreat, I may be again impelled to put my pen to paper in a manner not less disagreeable than any I have yet wrote in, that it would be proper or decent for me to continue to receive large pecuniary assistance from one of the most considerable and respectable individuals of that Party, whose cause and interest I was at the same time perhaps injuring in the most essential manner ? To be sure, the fact is known only to my own family, your Lordship and the Duke of Portland. But the operation of *honour* (as separated from *conscience*, which is not as between man and man but between man and

God) is to suppose the world acquainted with the transaction and then to consider in what light the wise and virtuous would regard it."

Burke said that he could not base his objections on any difference with Fitzwilliam regarding the method of opposing the growth of a system which they both disliked: he believed that no method could now be effective. The issue was in the hand of God, and all he was determined to do was to disassociate himself from having any hand, actively or passively, in the great change which was coming over the world. Burke told Fitzwilliam that he must be sure to throw his letter into the fire as soon as he had read it—"except you will first show it to the Duke of Portland, from whom I have hitherto concealed nothing, nor ever wish to keep anything secret."

Happily, Fitzwilliam disobeyed Burke's injunction. He saw that the letter redounded greatly to the honour of its writer, and instead of destroying it, he locked it up in a drawer. Fitzwilliam's financial aid, although it may have been curtailed, did not entirely cease at this time. Burke continued to receive some assistance, but his embarrassments accumulated, nevertheless, until they attained mountainous proportions. When Pitt arranged his pensions in 1794, his debts were again on the verge of overwhelming him.

In the early Summer of 1791 Burke went down to Margate for the sake of his wife's health. There he finished his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, which was his considered reply to Fox. This work, which was published in August, contained a defence of its author's consistency and claimed that he, and not Fox, was the true upholder of the Whig tradition. Burke struck a shrewd blow at the doctrine of natural

rights by maintaining that rights were more "natural" in society, than in a so-called state of nature. "Art is man's nature" ³⁸ and it is more natural for men to cultivate their reasons and to arrange themselves in civilized societies, than to abjure all those laws, customs and prejudices, without which they would speedily relapse into a state of bestiality. Burke, in fact, equated the original natural rights which Hobbes had sketched in the *Leviathan*, with the constitutional liberties which Englishmen enjoyed under the matchless blessing of their time-honoured Constitution.

George III was even more delighted with the *Appeal* than he had been with the *Reflections*. He acknowledged, in warm terms, the gift of a copy of the book, and when Burke attended the levee on August 15th he had a most gracious reception. After the levee Burke took the opportunity of having a few words with Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, about the affairs of William in India.³⁹ This conversation, too, was satisfactory. Burke's newly acquired favour at Court did not assist him at Carlton House, where he was regarded with all possible coldness by Fox's friend, the Prince of Wales. Burke complained ⁴⁰ that Fox and Sheridan had rendered his name odious to the Prince—"from whose prerogative alone my family can hope for anything"—and despite all the services which he had previously rendered the Prince at the time of the Regency crisis. There was, perhaps, some consolation in the fact that in August, 1791, Fitzwilliam "in a large public company" had expressed ⁴¹ his strong approval of the *Reflections*; Burke explained ⁴² to his son on August 16th, 1791, the attitude of the Rockingham Party towards the *Appeal*:

"They are secretly galled. They agree with me to a tittle; but they dare not speak out, for fear of hurting

Fox. As to me, they leave me to myself ; they see that I can do myself justice. Dodsley is preparing a third edition."

Richard Burke had at that time embarked upon a mission of some delicacy. The two brothers of the French King, "Monsieur," afterwards Louis XVIII, and the Comte D'Artois, afterwards Charles X, had fled from France at the beginning of the Revolution. They had established at Coblenz, on the Rhine, a shadow Court for Royalist exiles, and, in 1791, they sent their minister, De Calonne, to England, in order to enlist English aid. De Calonne went down to Margate to consult Burke secretly, and without the knowledge of the French Ambassador, about the restoration of the old order in France. Burke agreed, with some hesitation, to discuss this matter with Calonne, and it was arranged that young Richard Burke should go to Coblenz, in order to communicate to the Princes the views of his father. This invitation was a remarkable tribute to Burke, but, when Pitt was consulted, he was exceedingly guarded. The British Government could do nothing which might be interpreted as countenancing young Burke's mission in any way. Calonne had hoped to draw the Ministers into the ideas and schemes of the exiles, but Pitt was rightly resolved that England should not be embroiled in the troubles and intrigues of the Continental powers. On February 17th, 1792, he actually declared in the House of Commons that "there never was a time in the history of this country when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace, than we may at the present moment." In these circumstances, the utmost that Burke was able to obtain was a promise that his son might inform the Ministers of any matters of interest which might come to his notice while he was abroad.

RICHARD'S MISSION TO GERMANY

Richard's mission achieved no useful result, for the French Royalists were divided among themselves and difficult to help. The Ministers regarded Richard's journey as unnecessary, whilst the Opposition accused Burke of thinking that he could restore the French monarchy himself, and of wishing to restore all the abuses and arbitrary injustices of the past. In fact Burke made it clear that he was opposed to any restoration which did not embrace the reform of legal, ecclesiastical and economic abuses :

“ Though I make no doubt,” he told ⁴³ his son, “ of preferring the ancient course, or almost any other, to this vile chimera, and sick man's dream of government, yet I could not actively, or with a good heart and clear conscience, go to the re-establishment of a monarchical despotism in the place of this system of anarchy. I should think myself obliged to withdraw wholly from such a competition, and give repose to my age, as I should wish you to give other employment to your youth.”

Despite this rather dubious journey on the part of his son, Burke's position in the country was beginning to improve. Certain lines from Milton,⁴⁴ appended by Reynolds to a print of Burke, which he published in August, 1791, were very apt :

So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash . . .

.

. . . Unmoved

Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;

THE ANTI-JACOBIN CAUSE

Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them, forth he passed,
Long way, through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught ;
And with retorted scorn his track he turned
On those proud towers, to swift destruction doomed.

Burke resented this publication very much ; he induced Sir Joshua to cause all the undistributed copies and the plate itself to be destroyed. Although a few copies still exist in private hands, Burke did his best to see that as many as possible were destroyed. The print was reissued subsequently without the lines from Milton to which Burke had taken exception.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Europe at War Again

FROM the earliest days of the French Revolution Burke's doors were continuously open to receive a swarm of French refugees. He did everything he could to assist them, at first by appealing privately to friends, then by inviting public subscriptions, and lastly by appealing to the Government. Despite his own embarrassments, Burke often appeared to be holding a kind of shadow Court at Beaconsfield for the exiled nobility of France, over which he presided with a grave and distinguished mien. The exiles would hang upon his words while Burke, in fluent but atrocious French, denounced the authors of the Revolution and the supine attitude of the English Government towards the dangers by which it was confronted. At times Burke's guests were importunate and unreasonable. Madame de Genlis found herself unable to sleep if the least glint of light were permitted to enter her bedroom. After many devices for shutting out the light completely had been devised without success, she made Burke send for a carpenter to nail up every chink and crevice each night before she retired, and to remove the boards in the morning. Another *émigré* friend was the Abbé de la Bintinnaye, a relative of the Bishop of Auxerre. Burke had known both the Abbé and the Bishop at the time of his visit to France in 1773. On December 30th, 1794, he wrote¹ to the Abbé in response to a request for money, to say that he had not, at that time, a single

guinea which he could call his own. The demands upon him were innumerable :

“ When I was in town I used my best endeavours to borrow money, and I am still using them, but without success. When I have money, I do not want to be reminded of the necessities of my friends, according to my very scanty means of supplying them ; and I have many calls upon me from the necessitous who are connected with me by family ties.”

Burke added that if he were successful in raising money he had every intention of sending some to the Abbé, and that it was to the last degree painful to him to have had to refer to such a subject. Burke's last extant letter,² dictated from his deathbed, was addressed to a friend at Oxford, to thank him for his “ extraordinary kindness ” to some of Burke's *émigré* friends who had visited that place on Burke's introduction and suggestion.

Among the necessitous who were connected with Burke by family ties were his Catholic relatives on the Blackwater, in Co. Cork, where he had passed the happiest years of his childhood. On March 20th, 1792, Edmund wrote ³ to his son, who was then in Ireland :

“ When you go towards the Blackwater, if we have got any friends alive, and not quite ruined there, hinder them from showing you any honours in the way which, in old times, was not unusual with them, but which since are passed away, for in the present age and reign of newspapers they would be very mischievous. I have long been uneasy in my mind when I consider the early obligations, strong as debts, stronger than some debts, to some of my own family now advanced in life and fallen, I believe, into great penury. Mrs. Crotty is daughter of Patrick Nagle to whom (the father) I

DEATH OF REYNOLDS

cannot tell you all I owe. She has had me, a child in her arms, and must be now, I dare say, 74 years old, at least. I wish her much to have some relief, so do I to Katty Courtnay."

Edmund had recently received a legacy of two thousand pounds from Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he told Richard that he proposed to devote a twentieth part of it "to those two poor women—fifty to each; and I have *many strong reasons* why it should be wholly your act (as indeed the money is yours), without any other reference to me, than that you know how much I love them,—that you will desire them to keep it a profound secret. I suppose that you consent it should be done at all. God knows how little we can spare it. . . ."

The death of Reynolds in February, 1792, was a great grief to the Burkes, for they had all lived for years in the most familiar intimacy. Besides leaving Edmund two thousand pounds, Reynolds cancelled a bond which he held for a similar amount. After the funeral in Westminster Abbey, when Edmund, at the request of the family, rose to thank the corps of Royal Academicians for being present at the burial of their President, Burke broke down and was unable to continue. Under the terms of the will, Edmund was appointed an executor, and also as one of the guardians of Reynolds' niece and heiress, Mary Palmer, who was married in the Summer to the Earl of Inchiquin, son of the Marquis of Thomond.

William Burke and the elder Richard also benefited substantially as a result of Reynolds' death. Young Richard wrote ⁴ to William on August 17th, 1792: "Poor Sir Joshua's departing kindness has eased you of a great load." William owed much to Richard's skilful handling of his affairs: during the whole of his long

absence in India his salary and allowances were passed through Richard's hands. Lord Verney's death, in April, 1791, was, for all the Burkes, a most fortunate event :

"I confess," Richard told ⁵ William, "his death gave me no grief. I expected from it, and it procured, your deliverance. His niece and heir [Lady Fermanagh] I found to be liberal and feeling. In my last I desired you to write your acknowledgments to her. *If you have neglected it, by no means forget to repair the omission.* You may remember, the terms were £5,000 down, and £5,000 more, payable in four years, but upon this she promised to see reason. . . ."

It would not have been safe for William to return to England while Verney was alive.⁶ If he had returned, his fate might have been that of a mutual friend of whom Edmund wrote,⁷ on December 16th, 1790, to Captain (afterwards General) Cuppage, of the Royal Artillery, a relative of William's, that he had just been "arrested for ten thousand pounds on a bond which he was cheated into by Lord Verney. His niece, Lady Fermanagh, is the oppressor at present. I go to him some time to-morrow to make his situation as comfortable as I can." Richard told William that he had found Verney, when he last went to see him, obstinate, selfish, vindictive and dreadfully soured by perpetual concern over his money troubles. William had had the grace to express some sort of regret at Verney's death. On May 12th, 1791, a month after Verney's death, and six days after his break with Fox, Burke rose in the House of Commons to second a motion for a Committee of Enquiry into the question of Imprisonment for Debt. Burke said ⁸ that it was disgraceful to find more people incarcerated in the prisons of this country as a result of the laws affecting debtors than in those of the most

absolute foreign despotisms. Burke estimated that ten thousand people at least were in prison for Debt, and he said that their lot was not to be distinguished from slavery. Moreover, for every one person who was in gaol for Debt at least three others went in daily terror of imprisonment. Burke had been in trouble before with his constituents at Bristol, while he still represented that place in Parliament, on account of the sympathy for small debtors which he had expressed. Though William Burke could hardly have been described as a small debtor, he was relieved, by Verney's death, from the worst of his fears. On July 7th, 1792, Cornwallis, the Governor-General of Bengal, drily informed ⁹ Dundas : " William Burke has decided to go home, and has requested that I would mention him favourably to you. I do not, however, when I desire you to be civil to him, advise you to follow Conway's example, and make him Under-Secretary of State."

Sir Gilbert Elliot described ¹⁰ a dinner-party which Fitzwilliam gave a few months after William's return, on April 30th, 1793. Four Burkes were present—Edmund, William and the two Richards—with the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Spencer, Frederick Montagu, French Laurence and some others. Portland was expected, but he was detained at the House of Lords : " Burke has now got such a train after him," Elliot informed his wife, " as would sink anybody but himself : his son, who is quite *nauseated* by all mankind ; his brother, who is liked better than his son, but is rather oppressive with animal spirits, and brogue ; and his cousin, Will Burke, who is just returned from India as much ruined as when he went many years ago, and who is a fresh charge on any prospects of power Burke may ever have. Mrs. Burke has in her train Miss French, the most perfect *she-Paddy* that ever was caught. Notwithstanding these

disadvantages, Burke is himself a sort of *power* in the State. It is not even too much to say that he is a sort of *power* in *Europe* ; though totally without any of those means or the smallest share in them, which give or maintain power in other men." It is a remarkable fact that at the end of their lives and despite all vicissitudes the Burkes, financially and socially, were as closely united as they were in the beginning.

So far as his power went, Burke left no stone unturned in order to bring about a Coalition. He was convinced that the times demanded an enlargement of the basis of Pitt's Government, by the inclusion in it of the leading Whigs. At Party meetings, Burke spoke against Fox at considerable length,¹¹ attributing his actions to ambition, and urging Portland to repudiate him, or, at least, to say that all systematic opposition to the Government on the part of the Whigs was at an end. Burke advised ¹² Portland and Fitzwilliam to propose a test to Fox which should be made the basis of any coalition—"a total hostility to the French system, at home and abroad." If Fox rejected the test, Burke urged that all the sound members of the Party should abandon him, and co-operate with Pitt in the best interest of the country. But Fox's personal popularity and prestige were enormous: Portland and Fitzwilliam declined absolutely to break with him so long as any hope remained that he might, of his own accord, agree to a practicable scheme of Coalition. Though the Ministerialists might, in some circumstances, have been willing to work with Fox, no practicable proposal emerged during the negotiations of 1792. It was tentatively suggested that Pitt might resign the Treasury to some amiable figurehead like the Duke of Leeds, so that Fox and Pitt could conduct the Government together as Secretaries of State. Burke strongly objected to this

proposition on the ground that it was devoid of all foundation in political principle : Pitt, naturally, refused to consider it. Throughout the year 1792 the European situation continued to deteriorate, and Burke's apprehensions were shared by an ever-widening section of the nation. Jacobin propaganda, in varying forms, was making headway in every large town, and the position was rendered worse by the incidence of a commercial crisis of the first magnitude, and by an unbroken series of bad harvests which lasted from 1789 until 1802. The harvest of 1792 was one of the worst on record. In these circumstances there was general agreement regarding the desirability of some form of coalition, although it was soon apparent that the subversive elements in England were less powerful than many people feared. Such as they were, they proved quite powerless before the rising tide of anti-French feeling which was sweeping the country. As early as July, 1791, the house of Priestley, the Dissenter and friend of Shelburne, had been sacked in Birmingham by an anti-French mob shouting, " Church and King." Priestley's library, papers and scientific instruments were all destroyed, and there were similar disturbances elsewhere. In May, 1792, a month after the outbreak of war between France and Austria, the Government issued a Royal Proclamation to check the circulation of seditious literature. Among the literature which was suppressed by this measure was Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*, which had formerly been distributed in tens of thousands. Paine had foolishly advocated the establishment of a Republic in England, and when proceedings were started against him by the Attorney-General he fled to France, and became a member of the Convention. Before long he was thrown into prison by his new friends and only by accident escaped execution. The

Address to the Crown, in reply to the Royal Proclamation, was opposed by Fox but supported by many of his friends including Portland, Fitzwilliam and Windham. Burke at that time made two of his increasingly rare appearances in the House of Commons. On April 30th, 1792, he opposed a motion by Grey in favour of Parliamentary Reform, and on May 11th a motion by Fox for the relief of the Unitarians. Burke said that there was ample evidence that the Unitarians were disaffected subjects.

The French declaration of war on Austria was prompted partly by a desire to reply to Austrian threats, and partly by a desire to "liberate" the Austrian Netherlands—the modern Belgium—which belonged at that time to Vienna. Owing to lack of discipline in the armies the war began badly for France. Prussia marched to the support of her ally, and the combined Prussian and Austrian armies commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, entering France in August, captured the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun. Brunswick, before marching into France, had issued an idiotic proclamation on July 26th, 1792, declaring that the Allies intended to restore the authority of the French Crown : he threatened the French people with dire reprisals if their Royal family was subjected to any further indignities. The reply was inevitable. The Palace of the Tuileries was invaded by the mob : the Swiss Guard was massacred to a man : the King and Queen were thrown into prison. As the enemy advanced a wave of hysteria swept the country, against the Royalist "enemy" in its midst. A "Terror" was set up in Paris, in the supposed interests of national unity, and throughout France thousands of noble heads dropped at the foot of the guillotines. Burke, and Fox also, were profoundly shaken by the news of the September massacres, but when on September

20th, 1792, to the astonishment of everybody, the Prussians were turned back at the "cannonade" of Valmy, Fox recovered his equanimity and told ¹³ his favourite nephew, Lord Holland: "No public event, not excepting Saratoga and Yorktown ever happened that gave me so much delight! I would not allow myself to believe it for some days, for fear of disappointment."

By the beginning of November the allied armies had been expelled from France to the music of the Marseillaise, while Nice, Savoy, the Rhineland and Belgium were overrun by the revolutionary levies. Drunk with glory, the French established their First Republic, and issued the Decrees of November 19th and December 15th, 1792. By the first of these, all Peoples who chose to rise against their Governments were promised the armed support of the French democracy. By the second, French Republican institutions were imposed upon the territories which had already been "liberated." Burke was sick at heart: "The united military glory of Europe," he told ¹⁴ his son, "has suffered a stain never to be effaced. The Prussian and Austrian combined forces have fled before a troop of strolling players, with a Buffoon at their head."

A new era had, in fact, opened in the affairs of mankind. Armed democratic nationalism had given proof of its explosive possibilities. The French did almost everything they could in order to provoke England to war. Deputations from disaffected clubs and societies in England were received in Paris with every mark of attention: a large army was concentrated on the borders of Holland: the Treaty, which guaranteed to the Dutch the control of the waters of the Scheldt, was light-heartedly denounced. France had herself, as recently as 1785, confirmed the provision of the Treaty

of Westphalia (1648) which secured the control of the Scheldt to the Dutch. In 1788 Pitt had reaffirmed Britain's guarantee of that provision. The French now maintained that all existing treaties needed to be reviewed in the light of "the laws of Nature," and they claimed that when subjected to this test, it became clear that the Treaty was invalid, and that the Scheldt ought to be, and therefore was, open to the shipping of all nations. In order to implement this view, French war-ships were despatched to Antwerp, while French money and propaganda were employed in order to foment a democratic revolution in Holland. National interest and national honour alike required that England should come to the aid of the Dutch: France was the greatest military and the second greatest naval power in the world, and it was clearly unsafe to allow the Rhine delta to fall into such hands. It seemed as though the shade of Louis XIV had returned in order to preside at the Councils of the French "democrats": it was abundantly clear, at any rate, that a spirit of imperialist aggression was no monopoly in the hands of Kings and nobles.

On November 13th, 1792, Holland appealed to England for aid in case her independence was attacked: Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, assured the States-General that England would honour her Treaty obligations. For two and a half months negotiations continued in a vain attempt to avert the war for which England was now tardily preparing. The trial of the French King in Paris added to the flame of anti-French and anti-Jacobin sentiment which was sweeping England from end to end. Burke formally crossed the floor of the House of Commons: Loughborough accepted the Great Seal which had been put into commission since Thurlow's dismissal in June. Fox was growing every

day more isolated in his opposition, and Pitt, who had been willing to go to almost any lengths in order to preserve neutrality, was at last becoming convinced that war was inevitable in defence of British interests and of the sanctity of Treaties. Amid considerable interruption Burke declared in the House of Commons, on December 15th, 1792, that war with France was necessary for the security of English liberties, for the well-being of Europe, and for the happiness of mankind. On December 28th, he spoke ¹⁵ again on a Government Bill for restricting the activities of aliens. He denounced Fox, France, atheism and aliens at considerable length, and concluded his speech by drawing out of his coat a concealed dagger, which he flung with a theatrical gesture on the floor of the House, exclaiming :

“ This is what you are to gain by an alliance with France : wherever their principles are introduced their practice must follow. You must guard against their principles : you must proscribe their persons.”

The dagger, Burke explained, was not a fair weapon of war, but an instrument of assassination. It was a characteristic French weapon, and he happened to know that three thousand of such daggers had recently been ordered by a disaffected Englishman in Birmingham, of which seventy had been delivered :

“ It is my object to keep the French infection from this country : their principles from our minds : their daggers from our hearts. I vote for this Bill because I consider it the means of saving my life, and all our lives, from the hands of assassins. . . . When they smile, I see blood trickling down their faces : I see their insidious purposes : I see that the object of all their cajoling is—blood ! ”

EUROPE AT WAR AGAIN

To establish in England a system of immorality by precept, and of murder by example, was the object of the French. Burke's object, which was to make Honourable Members' flesh creep, was somewhat spoiled by a few regrettable guffaws, as he fumbled with the dagger in his coat.

On January 21st, 1793, Louis Capet, formerly Louis XVI, was guillotined in Paris. That bloody deed provided full scope for the dramatic instinct of the French: "Child of St. Louis," cried the Abbé on the scaffold, "ascend into Heaven!" Danton was even more magniloquent: "The Kings of Europe would attack us: we throw them the head of a King!" In London, and throughout the country, the news was received with universal grief and execration. The theatres were closed: many people of all classes put on mourning: great crowds paraded the streets, calling for war. Chauvelin, the unpopular and incompetent French ambassador, was handed his passports; and on February 1st, 1793, in a mood of reckless exaltation, war was declared by France on Holland and England.

Burke laughed from the first at the idea that England had gone to war in order to secure the Dutch in their possession of the Scheldt: "A war for the Scheldt: a war for a chamber-pot!" he exclaimed. The war was, in his eyes, a crusade upon which England had embarked in order to repair an outrage against the moral order of Europe:

"France is out of itself," he wrote,¹⁶ "—the moral France is separated from the geographical. The master of the house is expelled, and the robbers are in possession."

The lawful rulers of France were scattered abroad, and Burke considered that the main object of the war was to



The Dagger Scene: - or - The Plot discovered. *I've a'f' am too bold*

A Panic-Monger

restore the French monarchy, and as much as possible of the ancient order in France, purged of corruption and of the abuses of arbitrary power.

On February 28th, 1793, Burke and Fox had an unseemly altercation in the House of Commons during a debate on a motion by Sheridan, which sought to prove that the danger to be apprehended from seditious practices in England had been grossly exaggerated. Sheridan accused Burke of being a panic-monger ; all kinds of evil had arisen from this cause. Amongst them was the fact that Burke had lost his taste entirely, that he had become the slave of pantomimic gestures and contemptible conjuring tricks—filling his pockets with daggers and knives in order to lend point to his impassioned orations. Burke retorted ¹⁷ that the only mistake he had made about the daggers was when he said that seventy had been delivered out of an order which had been given for three thousand : four thousand had, in fact, been delivered out of a total requisition of ten thousand. Burke proceeded to read a long letter from the Birmingham manufacturers in order to substantiate this not very obvious or important point. He went on to describe the prison massacres in Paris at immense length, during which the attention of the House wandered, and asserted that Philippe Egalité had claimed and received the jointure of the Princess de Lamballe on the day after her head had been struck off on the guillotine. Fox shook his head at this statement, and Burke demanded to know whether Fox meant that what he had just said was untrue. “ Certainly ! ” Fox replied, “ but not more so than much of what you have said besides.” Burke was furious : he called Fox a liar. Fox rose at once and said that if Burke wished to insult him he had better see him outside the House. Burke was about to say something which it might have been

BURKE CALLS FOX A LIAR

impossible to recall when the Speaker intervened, and urged the House to return to the subject under discussion. Burke had to be content with accusing Fox of deserting his party. Fox had, he said, asserted that Kings could be called to account when they did wrong : so could the leaders of great Parties. When Loughborough joined the Government he had put the national interest first : Fox had " sacrificed no interest to the value of a cat's whisker. He was only sacrificing to the vilest idol that ever was set up."

Burke's difference with the Whigs on the subject of Fox was a source of embarrassment to his son. Young Richard Burke had for some time been worrying Fitzwilliam to find him a seat in Parliament. When a vacancy occurred at Peterborough, a close borough which Fitzwilliam controlled, Richard, on August 16th, 1793, renewed ¹⁸ his application in a letter of quite inordinate length. He complained that it was " afflicting almost to distraction," that he should be denied a seat on the ground that he could not pledge himself to vote with Fox, " a man with whom you yourself do scarce in any instance vote, or are likely to vote." Richard said that the whole course of his life depended on the possession of a seat in Parliament, and that he proposed, accordingly, to set out " the progress and state " of his feelings upon the subject of his relations with Fitzwilliam.

The progress and state of Richard's feelings were set out in ample detail. Richard claimed that he had inherited all his father's devotion to the house of Wentworth Fitzwilliam :

" I can never," he said, " allude to my father without expressing the deep sense I feel, of obligations which, one day or another, I may have an opportunity, if not of returning, at least of publishing. He also owes you

obligations of a political nature. But my father and I, though near, are not one. My identity renders me capable of serving, and being served."

He had, he said, accepted the management of Fitzwilliam's legal affairs, in the hope that it would afford him "a bond of friendship and a means of intercourse": "I thought it no presumption to love you as a brother. The inequality of rank and fortune (great as it is) appeared to me no obstacle. I thought you above pride, and I was not of a turn to feel humiliation. . . ." In his father's name, Richard added, he found some substitute both for riches and greatness, and he had never considered it possible that Rockingham's heir should seek to exclude Burke's only son from public life and the prospect of public honours!

Fitzwilliam's reply ¹⁹ was couched in the form of a gentle rebuke:

"Why, my dear Burke, have you so little feeling for my respect, my attachment, my veneration for your father,—why are you so cruel as to wring from me, to force me to commit to paper what I hardly confided to my own bosom, that he and I naturally differ in politics."

Fitzwilliam said that he supported the war, because he was convinced of its necessity, and of its justice, but that he remained, nevertheless, in systematic opposition to Pitt and his Ministry:

"I will be found," he grandly observed, "still upon the breach, though I am found there alone, because my opinions of his principles and of his practice, still remain unaltered.—But I shall not be found alone: I shall be found where I ought to be—by the side of the Duke of Portland. Is this the case with your father? No!

he is no longer there ! He delivered himself over into the hands of Pitt, formally and professedly, last November."

Fitzwilliam asked how, in such circumstances, it would be possible for him to bring Richard into Parliament without declaring for Burke, not against Fox, but against the Duke of Portland ? Edmund himself could not decently have intervened in this altercation. He, however, attended Portland to Oxford at the beginning of July, 1793, in order to be present at the Duke's installation as Chancellor of the University. Convocation offered then to confer upon Burke the honorary degree of LL.D., which had formerly been withheld. Burke declined this honour for himself, but asked ²⁰ the Vice-Chancellor that it should be conferred instead upon young Richard, which was accordingly done. Windham, and others, were honoured at the same time.

In February, 1793, the Whig Club had before it a letter addressed by Fox to his constituents, the Westminster electors, and published by Fox in defence of his conduct. On the proposition of Lord William Russell the Club resolved that their confidence in Fox was confirmed and strengthened as a result of the calumnies against him. Fitzwilliam and Portland concurred in this resolution, but Burke, as one of Fox's principal "calumniators," felt himself censured by the resolution and resigned from the Club. Others, including Windham and French Laurence, seceded at the same time. Burke subsequently regretted ²¹ his precipitate action in resigning, but he sent a letter to Portland, which was not intended for publication, entitled "Observations on the Conduct of the Minority" in which he imputed Fox's conduct to bad motives, and censured it, as he felt that it deserved. Portland read this work, but told ²² Burke that he could not agree with Burke's view of Fox's

motives. Early in 1797 some ill-feeling was caused by the publication of a garbled version of this paper, without Burke's knowledge, as a result of the dishonesty of a copyist whom Burke had employed. The work was then called "Fifty-four Articles of Impeachment against Charles James Fox." Burke was naturally furious when he heard of this ; an injunction was obtained by his friend Walker King, and publication was stopped at once.²³

On May 25th, 1793, the one hundred and twenty-fifth day of the hearing of the Impeachment of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, Burke became involved in an unpleasant scene with the Archbishop of York. Burke was examining, rather sharply, one of the witnesses for the defence when the Archbishop, who was no other than Burke's former friend, William Markham, rose in his place in order to protest that Burke's conduct was as outrageous as that of Marat or Robespierre. He called upon Burke to remember that he was addressing a gentleman—not a common pick-pocket. Burke took a moment in which to recover, and then declared that he had not heard a word of what the Archbishop had said. He ignored the interruption and proceeded with his cross-examination. The matter was subsequently raised in the Press, and there was, in the House of Commons, some support for the idea of prosecuting the editor of *The World* for giving publicity to an alleged libel on the House of Commons. The matter was happily allowed to drop, after Philip Francis had declared that Burke never did anything by halves. His endowments of mind were extraordinary, but he always acted, as the Italians say, *con amore*, with vehemence, even in trifles. He was always in earnest, and he invariably went to the full length of any opinion he held. Francis added that the House knew the worst as well as the

best of Burke. He might be right : he might be wrong : he was always in earnest ; there was no double-dealing, hypocrisy or prevarication in his nature. It was evident that Francis had studied Burke's character to some purpose ; none knew better than he that Burke was like some high-mettled horse, which requires encouragement at the starting-post, but can hardly be restrained by any art from crashing through the boundary-ropes in the excitement and fury of the race. Fox, probably with a spice of mischief, rose to suggest that proceedings might be instituted against the Most Reverend Archbishop ; but Burke, in a modest speech, attributed the Archbishop's vehemence to the natural intemperance of old age : he said that he harboured no resentment. He declined to vote in the affair at all, and the Motion of Complaint was adjourned *sine die* by 60 votes to 8.

During the Autumn of 1793, Burke was engaged in writing his "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies." He affirmed that England was fighting a war for the defence of religion and he urged strongly that France should not be despoiled, after the victory was won. Pitt, by sending out large quantities of troops to seize the French West Indian Islands, was imitating his father's strategy. Chatham had conquered Canada : Pitt, too, proposed to recoup the British tax-payer for the sacrifice he was making, by consolidating a new Colonial Empire overseas. During the eighteenth century the West Indian islands were more highly valued than Canada on account of the enormous fortunes which were continually being made there. Between 1793 and 1796 no less than forty thousand British soldiers met their deaths in the West Indies, principally from disease. This was by far the heaviest loss suffered by England in any campaign of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which lasted,

with short intervals, from 1793 to 1815. To Burke, the war was of too sacred a character to be used for the purpose of imperial aggrandizement. It would be folly to destroy France: "My clear opinion is," he wrote,²⁴ "that the liberties of Europe cannot possibly be preserved but by her remaining a very great, and preponderating power." Burke declared that it was madness for England to aim at seizing the French colonies, or at ruining French commerce. It was madness for the Continental Powers to seek to detach permanently the frontier provinces of France. Such a policy would settle nothing and would only furnish material for a fresh cycle of wars. By the Spring of 1794, the military situation appeared to hold out few hopes of an early victory. The First Coalition consisted of Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Spain, Holland, Sardinia and Naples. But Russia and Prussia were more intent on carving up the corpse of Poland than in crusading against the Jacobins. The Allied armies were inspired by no selfless flame of patriotism: the soldiers fought without enthusiasm for the selfish and divergent aims of a posse of hereditary despots. In France, on the other hand, under the ruthless, but inspiring dictatorship of Robespierre, a spirit of heroism, born of nationalist fervour and despair, swept everything before it. The *levée en masse* was ordered and the tide of battle turned. A Royalist rising was suppressed in the South: Toulon was abandoned by the British: Holland was overrun: Belgium, lost in the Spring of 1793, was reconquered: French soil was once again everywhere freed from the heel of the invader. Burke followed these important and exciting events with the most intense absorption:

"Now they are bad," he told William,²⁵ on September 15th, 1793,—"now good;—up and down, and with

them our poor hearts, up and down also. Such mortals we are, depending for our happiness or misery on the last Gazette."

On November 29th, 1793, Burke wrote ²⁶ to Fitzwilliam, to give him advice about the education of his son, Lord Milton. In the course of his letter he again apologized for being unable, owing to the Hastings trial, to resign his seat in Parliament, and he again repeated that their financial intercourse must end: "I send back the enclosed papers which you were so good as to send me, with ten thousand thanks. My dear Lord, the debt of gratitude is never to be cancelled, and whilst honor, virtue, and benignity are entitled to the love and esteem of mankind, you must have an incontrovertible title to my cordial and respectful attachment. But when confidence and good opinion no longer exist, you must be sensible that an intercourse of this kind cannot continue. I see plainly, and I feel too that it has already continued much too long." Burke said that he had stayed away from Parliament as much as he could, and that he did not think that he had ever had occasion to give a vote contrary to Fitzwilliam's interest. He saw, however, that they now differed on the subject of the French Revolution, not in regard to the quality, but in regard to the magnitude of the problem: "the moral state of Mankind fills me with dismay and horror. The abyss of Hell itself seems to yawn before me. I must act, think and feel, according to the exigencies of this tremendous season. There are things of smaller magnitude, which at another time would be worth attending to, and the attention to them would have its grace and value, and almost rank as virtue. But though perhaps a man may be permitted to sacrifice himself to his peculiar Tastes, it would be a crime to sacrifice to them

the present age, and a long posterity. The one may be a pardonable suicide. The other is a cruel massacre."

In December, 1793, Burke's domestic life was cheered by the marriage of his niece, Mary French, to a neighbour, Captain Haviland, son of General Haviland. The young man was distinctly a *parti*, as he had "something not inconsiderable," besides his pay. Two months later, in February, 1794, the Burkes' domestic circle was invaded, for the first time, by death, and Richard Burke, the elder, was struck down suddenly during the night at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn. His brother's death was a bitter grief to Edmund, but happily when the body was laid to rest in the floor of the Parish Church at Beaconsfield, Edmund had no knowledge how soon that grave was to be reopened to receive other and even dearer remains. Among the honours which Richard had received at Bristol apart from his Recordership were those of the Freedom of the City, which was conferred upon him on June 19th, 1784, and membership of the Common Council, to which he was elected on May 10th, 1786. So perished "honest Dick," in a state of cheerful insolvency, after a remarkable, unsuccessful, but probably quite enjoyable career.

By the beginning of 1794 it had become impossible any longer to doubt that a Coalition between Whigs and Tories was imminent. The event was delayed for some months, but Edmund told ²⁷ his son, on January 10th, 1794, that he believed Fox might soon agree to a coalition, in order to prevent his party from evaporating to the dregs. At the end of January, Burke attended a great Party meeting which Portland had summoned at Burlington House: he thereby showed that although his position remained highly anomalous he still retained a nominal connection with

“ CONSTRUCTIVE ” TREASON

the Whigs.* Burke's principal enemy in the House was now Sheridan, who, having come between Burke and Fox, was eager on every possible occasion to demonstrate Burke's alleged inconsistency to the world. Burke complained ²⁸ that on the few occasions on which he came down to the House he invariably found the whole conduct of his life ripped up and ransacked. Sheridan held Burke responsible for the spread of popular panic which had caused the Government to take strong measures against the growth of “ Jacobin ” opinion in England. Nonconformist preachers, pacificists, editors of newspapers of a reformist or speculative tendency, were constantly being prosecuted. A Piccadilly bookseller was sent to prison for four years for selling the *Rights of Man*: Muir and Palmer were transported from Scotland to Botany Bay for their manner of advocating Parliamentary Reform. Habeas Corpus was suspended: public meetings were prohibited: but the Government went too far, and the national sense of fair play administered an abrupt check to these proceedings. A capital charge of “ Constructive ” Treason was trumped up against Thomas Hardy, the shoemaker and founder of the “ Corresponding Society,” and one or two others. When, after one of the most exciting trials of the century, a Tory jury returned a verdict of “ Not Guilty,” the whole of London, which was violently anti-Jacobin, broke into loud rejoicings. During the Debate on the suspension of Habeas Corpus, Burke observed ²⁹ that in former ages of unrest the suspension of Habeas Corpus had enabled the heads of many noble families which were held in great respect to-day to be safely lodged in the Tower. The same happy result might

* Sir Nicholas Wroxall (*Posthumous Memoirs*, iii, p. 344) said that Burke shifted his place several times before he finally crossed over to the Government side of the House.

flow from the adoption of the present measure. Sheridan again accused Burke of inconsistency on the ground that while he was always fulminating against democratic clubs, conventions and societies, his own son had acted as the paid agent of a Catholic society in Ireland. Burke retorted that whatever Sheridan's motives might be in making such insinuations, he "could not be such a fool as not to know they were irrelevant." Burke pointed out how contemptuously the Catholics had been treated and what loyal subjects they naturally were.

The Hastings trial was at last drawing to a close. On March 5th, 1794, the House of Commons adopted a motion by Burke for appointing a Committee to enquire into the causes of the delays which had occurred. Burke was Chairman of this Committee of Enquiry, and after drafting the Report with his own hand, he presented it to the House on April 17th. The Report alleged that the Peers and the Judges had acted together in a manner which infringed the ancient privileges of the Commons. The Peers had consulted the Judges in secret, instead of publicly, on points of procedure; the Judges had given their advice not upon the law so much as upon the particular case which was being tried. It was uncertain, Burke said, upon what principles the Judges had tendered their advice, but in old days the Commons would not have been willing to submit any question of Parliamentary privilege to the judgment of the Courts at Westminster. The Law of Parliament was superior to all other law, and an impeachment was not, in Burke's view, subject to the ordinary rules of legal procedure. This Report was published piratically, and sold to the public: Thurlow, in the House of Lords, thereupon denounced Burke for a crime of "a very heinous nature," in "vilifying and misrepresenting the conduct of Judges and Magistrates." On the following day,

THE DOG RETURNED TO HIS VOMIT

May 23rd, 1794, Burke replied ³⁰ to Thurlow in the Commons, justifying what he had done on behalf of the Commons of England. No comment was made by any other Member, which was hardly to be wondered at, since the question at issue was one of the utmost doubt and complexity. Burke was probably the only layman in the kingdom who was capable of challenging the highest legal authorities of the day to a contest on their own ground.

Five days later, on May 28th, 1794, Burke began his final speech in Westminster Hall, in General Reply to the evidence which had been called on Hastings' behalf. It was a tremendous effort which lasted for nine days, and it fills nearly two stout volumes of the twelve-volume edition of his *Works* :

“ It is not,” Burke declared,³¹ “ that culprit who is upon trial ; it is the House of Commons that is upon its trial ; it is the House of Lords that is upon its trial ; it is the British Nation that is upon its trial before all other Nations, before the present generation, and before a long, long posterity.”

Burke said that the Commons of Great Britain were not disposed to quarrel with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness which had moulded up Revenge into the frame and constitution of Man ; Revenge was, however, rightly taken out of the hands of the original, injured proprietor lest it should be carried beyond the bounds of moderation and justice. After denouncing the illegality of every species of arbitrary power, Burke attacked Hastings' Counsel for quoting travellers' tales to the effect that despotism was the only principle of government acknowledged by the peoples of India : “ The dog returned to his vomit. After having vomited out this vile, bilious stuff of arbitrary power, and afterwards

denied it to be his, he gets his Counsel in this place to resort to the loathsome mess again.”³² Hastings’ Counsel had cited the examples of Gengis Khan and Tamerlaine :

“ Good God ! have they run mad ? Have they lost their senses in guilt ? . . . To compare a clerk at a bureau, to compare a fraudulent bullock-contractor (for we could show that his first elementary malversations were in carrying on fraudulent bullock-contracts, which contracts were taken from him with shame and disgrace, and restored with greater shame and disgrace), to compare him with the Conquerors of the World ? We never said he was a tiger and a lion. No ! We said he was a weasel, and a rat. . . . When God Almighty chose to humble the pride and presumption of Pharaoh, and to bring him to shame, He did not affect His purpose with tigers and lions ; but He sent lice, mice, frogs and everything loathsome and contemptible, to pollute and destroy the country. Think of this, my Lords, and of your listening here to these people’s long accounts of Tamerlaine’s camp of two hundred thousand persons, and of his building a pyramid at Bagdad with the heads of ninety thousand of his prisoners ! ”³³

Burke adverted again to his conception of the Law of God, the Law of Nature, and of Nations, which held all men and all governments, each in their appointed place :

“ The man who quotes as precedents the abuses of tyrants and robbers, pollutes the very Fountains of Justice, destroys the foundation of all Law, and thereby removes the only safeguard against evil men, whether governors or governed,—the guard which prevents governors from becoming tyrants, and the governed from becoming rebels.”

It was evident that Burke's indignation had not been mellowed by time. On the contrary, it seemed to have turned rancid, and on the second day of the speech Hastings was described as ³⁴ "a tyrant, an oppressor, and a murderer," who was guilty of the blood of thousands of innocent men and women. On the sixth day of the speech Burke was discussing the treatment of the Begums, when Hastings rose to suggest ³⁵ that human nature must at last be exhausted by hearing such gross falsehoods so often repeated. Burke was beside himself with fury : he demanded whether the Court would permit "this wicked wretch, this scourge of India, this criminal, to insult the House of Commons." He said that Hastings deserved to be sent to Bridewell for his insolence. On the eighth day of the speech, Burke suggested ³⁶ ironically that Hastings might have been in love with the younger of the Begums. He compared him with Mark Antony, because the Roman also had shown himself willing to play the fool for prostitutes ; he went on to compare Hastings with Nero, Heliogabalus and Domitian. On the ninth day Burke began by ³⁷ quoting an epigram which had been written by Edward Law, the future Lord Ellenborough, who was one of Hastings' Counsel ; it had attained a wide circulation and Burke complained that Counsel had taken improper liberties which might have the effect of prejudicing the minds of the Court. The lines ran :

Oft have I wondered, that on Irish ground
 No poisonous reptile ever yet was found.
 Revealed the secret stands of Nature's work :
 She saved her venom to create a Burke.

Burke ended his speech on the ninth day with a peroration on the beauties of justice, in the course of which he referred ³⁸ to the warfare which he had conducted

for twenty-two years, the last seven at their Lordships' Bar, with "the crimes, with the vices, with the exorbitant wealth, with the enormous and overpowering influence of Eastern corruption." Four days later, on June 20th, 1794, Pitt rose in the House of Commons to propose that the Thanks of the House should be accorded to the Managers of the Impeachment for the labours which they had just concluded. An Honourable Member named Sumner suggested that Burke's name should be excluded from the Vote of Thanks, on the ground that his language had disgraced and degraded the House of Commons, and that he had presumed, in the name of that House, to vilify the character of every gentleman who had had the honour and good-fortune to serve in India. Sumner quoted some of the epithets which Burke had employed, and accused the Chief Manager of turning the Impeachment into a farce through his intemperance. Burke had called Hastings "a spider of Hell"; he had run through the entire vocabulary of Billingsgate in search of abuse. He had insulted the dead: he had slandered the living: "swindler," "cheat," "thief," "rogue," "sharper," "bloodsucker," "bloody tyrant," "louse," "rat," "murderer," "captain-general of iniquity,"—these formed only a tithe of the mass of foul, extravagant language with which Burke had abused Hastings. Windham, Francis, Fox, and even Sheridan rose in defence of Burke, and the amendment to exclude Burke's name from the Vote of Thanks was defeated by 55 votes to 21. The motion that a Vote of Thanks should be accorded was then duly passed by 50 votes to 21.

Immediately after the Vote of Thanks had been carried, Burke applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. Pitt told ³⁹ him that he was not prepared with any defence when he should be charged with being accessory to

depriving the House of Commons of one of its greatest ornaments, and the public of the continuance of services for which it was already so deeply indebted. Fitzwilliam, while regretting that Burke had not decided to retain his seat until the verdict was given, declared ⁴⁰ that the days of his borough's greatest lustre were over : the House of Commons had lost its brightest ornament and the source of its greatest wisdom. Fitzwilliam expressed his gratitude for the honour which Burke had conferred upon him by sitting in Parliament for a borough which he controlled. He offered the seat to Edmund's son, and Burke, in reply, said ⁴¹ that the letter would remain an heirloom in his family for ever. Any goodness shown to his son was "by far the greatest favour which could possibly be conferred on me."

The last scene in Westminster Hall was still delayed for many months, but on April 29th, 1795, the Hall was almost as crowded as it had been on the first day, more than seven years before, in February, 1788. There had been no less than one hundred and eighty changes in the Peerage since that time, and it was understood that only those Peers who had attended Westminster Hall since the commencement of the Trial should give their verdicts at its conclusion. The greatest number of Peers who ever attended the Court was one hundred and sixty-eight, but this number attended only on the day of Burke's opening speech. In general the Court consisted of between thirty and fifty Lords. Of the twenty Managers of the Impeachment, three had retired from Parliament since the Trial began ; two had succeeded to peerages ; two had gone abroad on foreign service ; and one was dead. When the Lords, in their robes, took their places in Westminster Hall at twelve-thirty in the afternoon Hastings was called into Court and ordered to kneel, to rise and to withdraw. Twenty-

nine Peers attended in order to pronounce judgment, and it had been agreed that the charges should be finally divided into sixteen separate Articles. A verdict was to be given upon each Article by means of a majority vote. The Lord Chancellor (Loughborough) held in his hand a list of the titles of the Peers present ; he proceeded to put the first question to each individual Peer, beginning with the junior Baron, in the following form :

“ Is Warren Hastings, Esquire, Guilty, or Not Guilty, of High Crimes and Misdemeanours charged by the Commons in the First Article of Charge ? George, Lord Douglas, Earl of Morton in Scotland, how says your Lordship, is Warren Hastings, Esquire, Guilty or Not Guilty of the said charges ? ”

Lord Morton thereupon stood up, uncovered, and laying his right hand upon his breast, pronounced :

“ Not Guilty, upon my honour.”

“ James, Lord Fife, how says your Lordship ? ”

“ Not Guilty, upon my honour.”

“ Charles, Lord Somers, how says your Lordship ? ”

“ Not Guilty, upon my honour.”

“ Francis, Lord Rawdon, Earl of Moira in Ireland, how says your Lordship ? ”

“ Not Guilty, upon my honour.”

So the voting proceeded. On the first charge, which related to Cheyt Singh, the Rajah of Benares, Hastings was acquitted by 23 votes to 6. He was acquitted unanimously upon two charges and by large majorities upon all the rest. Loughborough himself registered a personal verdict of Guilty on thirteen out of the sixteen Articles. Fitzwilliam returned a verdict of Guilty on no less than fourteen Articles. The Duke of Norfolk, after voting Guilty on the first and second Articles, refused to give any verdict on the remainder. The

HASTINGS IS ACQUITTED

other Lords who voted in addition to those already named were Walsingham, Thurlow, Hawke, Boston, Sandys, Middleton, Sidney, Falmouth, Carnarvon, Dorchester, Beverley, Radnor, Warwick, Coventry, Mansfield, Suffolk, Townshend, Bridgewater and Leeds. The Bishops of Rochester and Bangor, and the Archbishop of York, also voted: they returned verdicts of Not Guilty on all the sixteen counts. When the verdicts had been given, Hastings was recalled to the Bar where he knelt and was bidden to rise. Loughborough then told him that he was acquitted of the Articles of Impeachment which had been exhibited against him by the Commons. He said that he was discharged accordingly, but that he must pay his fees.

CHAPTER TWELVE

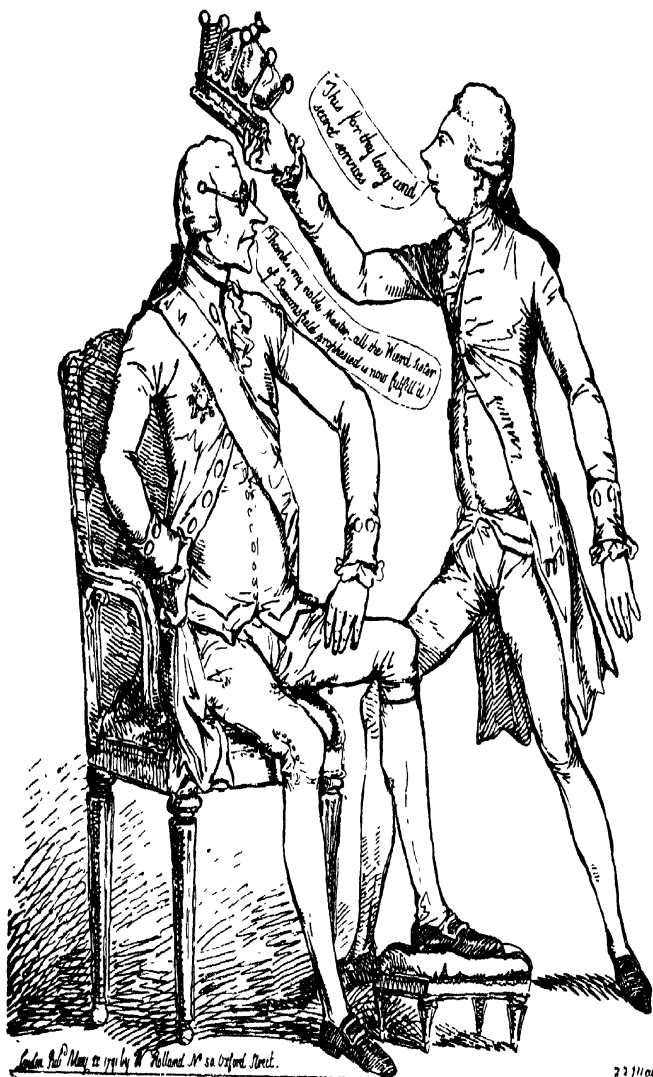
The Cause of Ireland

FITZWILLIAM chose Richard Burke to succeed his father as Member of Parliament for Malton. He felt no scruple in doing so, because in July, 1794, the Portland Whigs at last coalesced with Pitt's Tory Ministry. A third Secretaryship of State was instituted to accommodate Portland, while Fitzwilliam, who became Lord President of the Council, was promised Ireland, where he had large estates, as soon as a suitable place could be found for Westmorland, the retiring Lord-Lieutenant. William Windham became Secretary for War. Fitzwilliam proposed to take Richard Burke with him to Ireland as Chief Secretary, and Edmund raised to his lips the cup of happiness that was soon to be dashed out of his hand. It had been agreed that Ireland, in the scheme of coalition, should be regarded as a Whig province and Edmund, undaunted by the failure of his Indian crusade, prepared to embark upon the fifth of the "great, just and honourable causes" to which his life had been devoted. He hoped to see Catholic emancipation secured in Ireland through the destruction of the corrupt and selfish system of "influence" which was managed by the English junta at Dublin Castle. With Fitzwilliam as Viceroy, and Richard as Chief Secretary, Burke prepared to sound the trumpet, and embark upon a last crusade against the forces of tyranny and injustice. The cause of English liberties had been fought in England, and in America :

the cause of India had been fought : the anti-Jacobin cause was being fought : the cause of Ireland was now once more in the forefront of the political scene, and Edmund braced himself for the final battle of his life. Edmund's happiness was the greater inasmuch as he now enjoyed the prospect of seeing his son launched into public life under propitious auspices. He prepared to retire from active participation in public affairs, and to substitute, in all things, his son for himself, in order to make what he considered just amends to the boy for all the trouble in which he had been involved through his father's financial entanglements. The last financial business which Richard helped to arrange for his father was the negotiation of a pension. Before the matter could go through Richard fell seriously ill, but he told ¹ Windham, on June 19th, 1794, that the proposed pecuniary arrangement was in every way fully adequate to his wishes ; at the same time he expressed surprise that there should be any kind of demur about the conferment of a peerage upon his father :

“ I did not conceive that what was considered a debt due from the country, due to the opinion of Europe at large, could be less than the peerage. . . . If they do not give it to him, for God's sake for what kind of service is it reserved . . . who do they mean to make peers in future ? ”

If Richard had lived, Pitt would have recommended ² a peerage, with an adequate pension attached, for two lives ; Edmund had, indeed, already decided to take the name of Beaconsfield. The outlook, therefore, in the early summer of 1794, seemed full of promise ; Edmund hoped that he might soon see Catholic emancipation secured in Ireland, through the destruction of the “ old system ” of Government jobbery in Dublin Castle. He



London, 22 May 1891 by W. Holland, No. 38 Oxford Street.

22 May 1891

POLITICAL PLAYTHINGS FOR PROSTITUTE PATRIOTS.

A Pension and A Coronet

RICHARD'S IRISH MISSION

told ³ his friend, Langrishe, in 1792, that that system was "a machine as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a People, and the debasement, in them, of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

He said ⁴ again : " Our Constitution is not made for great, general, and proscriptive exclusions ; sooner or later it will destroy them or they will destroy the Constitution." Burke dreaded lest, if emancipation were delayed, the Irish Catholics might become infected, as so many of the English Dissenters had been, with the Jacobin fever.

In August, 1790, Richard Burke, because of his father's name, had been informally appointed to act as Agent to the Irish Catholics. He visited Ireland, in that capacity, at the end of December, 1791, shortly after his return from Coblenz. The Ministers were far more sympathetic towards Richard's Irish journey than they had been towards his mission to Germany. They had noted with alarm that the leaders of the Catholic Committee, faced with continued Government obstructiveness, were beginning to speak a coarser language than any which had previously been heard. The aristocratic element was steadily being eliminated and it was the Catholic Committee's policy of militant democracy, combined with his own defects of judgment and temper, which caused Richard's Irish mission to fail. Soon after his arrival in Dublin he gave the most universal offence by running down from his seat in the Gallery of the House of Commons during a Debate on the Catholic question, and advancing into the body of the House almost as far as the Speaker's chair. There was a general call of " Custody," and Richard narrowly escaped arrest.⁵ Before long the Catholic Committee decided to be rid of young Burke, but they paid him the

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND

handsome sum of two thousand guineas for his services. Richard was succeeded by Wolfe Tone, but he made several attempts to come back. He was opposed to the democratic politics of Tone's Society of United Irishmen, and Tone accordingly hated him. He noted ⁶ in his Diary, on July 21st, 1792, that Richard wanted to come over again to Ireland "where he can be of no possible use, and leave England, where, by the bye, he is of just as little. A puppy or worse." Two days later Tone remarked that he had read "a very long prancing letter from [Richard] Burke, filled with nonsense about the French Revolution, on which he is as mad as his father."

In September (when Richard was again in Ireland, ostensibly on a private visit to the Blackwater), Edmund had John Keogh's boys staying with him at Beaconsfield. Keogh, who had begun life as a tradesman, was one of the most aggressively "democratic" of the leaders of the Catholic Committee, and when Edmund wrote to the father in praise of the boys, Tone commented ⁷ : "the scheme is obvious enough. He wants to enlist Gog [Keogh] on behalf of his son, but it won't do. Gog sees the thing clear enough. Sad ! Sad ! Edmund wants to get another 2,000 guineas for his son, if he can ; dirty work ! Edmund no fool in money matters. Flattering boys to carry his point. Is that *sublime* and *beautiful* ? "

Such, at that time, were some of the difficulties which had to be faced in working for Catholic emancipation. While Richard was in Ireland in September, 1792, Edmund suffered the loss of his oldest friend, Richard Shackleton of Ballitore, whose annual visits to Beaconsfield, when he came to England to attend the meetings of the Society of Friends, had given great pleasure. Edmund told ⁸ Shackleton's daughter that her father's

CONCESSIONS TO THE IRISH CATHOLICS

“innocent vivacity and cheerfulness, which made his early days so pleasant,” had continued the same to the last. Although Richard left Ireland finally in September, 1792, his efforts on behalf of the Catholics were, perhaps, not entirely unavailing. In April, 1793, Hobart’s Irish Catholic Relief Bill received the Royal Assent, after being passed by large majorities through both Houses of the Irish Parliament. The English Ministers had used all their influence to assist its passage. By that Act Irish Catholics, though still debarred from sitting in Parliament and from all the highest Offices of State, obtained a substantial measure of relief. They were admitted to the Franchise as forty-shilling freeholders ; they became entitled to bear arms, to serve on Grand Juries, to receive University degrees, to become members of Corporations, to hold minor offices and commissions in the Army below the rank of Major-General. Burke was overjoyed ; he told Grattan ⁹ he was convinced now that the rest must speedily follow, and he suggested that his son had been of real service to the cause. Grattan, in reply, generously assured Burke that his son had had a great triumph. Praise of his son was sweeter at all times, in Burke’s ear, than anything else in the world, but Grattan’s real opinion of young Burke was unfavourable. He noted ¹⁰ that “He had been spoiled by Mr. Burke, who greatly overrated his abilities ; for he was vain and conceited, and wanted temper and modesty.”

The few days which Burke and his son spent at Wentworth Woodhouse at the beginning of July, 1794, should have been among the happiest of Burke’s life. Richard was presented to the electors of Malton in his father’s room, and duly returned to Parliament as one of the two Members for that rotten borough. For some months, however, the state of Richard’s health had been less satisfactory than usual. There were, at the same

time, rumours of an unfortunate love affair with a governess who lived near Beaconsfield. No one had ventured to alarm the young man's parents about the state of his health, and both were quite ignorant of the nature of the malady by which their son was attacked. Richard possessed delicate good looks, and his face was habitually a trifle pale. He now appeared flushed, and was troubled increasingly by a hacking cough. About the time of the election, the cough grew worse, and Richard began to vomit blood. Old Brocklesby shook his head: other doctors were called into consultation, and an immediate change of air was ordered. The Burkes moved to Cromwell House at Brompton but the case was hopeless. Richard was afflicted by a virulent and galloping consumption, and Edmund abandoned himself to the most terrible despair. He watched his son waste visibly, and die by inches before his eyes. On the morning of August 2nd, 1794, Richard left his bed and walked unaided into his father's room. Burke assisted him back to his own room at once, and as he sat grief-stricken and silent, by the side of the bed, Richard began gently to chide his father, assuring him that he felt better, and that he was not afraid.

"What noise is that?" Richard asked suddenly. "Does it rain?"

"Oh, no!" said Burke, "it is the wind rustling through the trees."

Jane Burke had in the meantime come into the room, and Richard, in order to show how collected his thoughts were, proceeded to quote some lines from Milton,¹¹—his father's favourite poet:

His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow
Breathe soft, or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pines
With every Plant, in sign of worship wave!

DEATH OF YOUNG BURKE

Richard feebly endeavoured to accompany this recitation with the appropriate gestures, spreading out his hands and raising his head. Twice he repeated the lines—then sank exhausted into his parents' arms. A brief struggle ensued in the midst of which Walker King and others entered the room, and Mrs. Burke was persuaded to leave. In a few minutes all was quiet, and Walker King left Edmund's side to inform Mrs. Burke that Richard had just expired in his father's arms.

To Edmund the blow was mortal, although for his wife's sake chiefly he did his utmost to withstand it.

"The storm has gone over me," he wrote,¹² "and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth."

He told ¹³ Fitzwilliam, in reply to a letter of condolence, that it was not grief so much as remorse which tore his heart to pieces. His remorse was due not to any supposed neglect of the early symptoms of Richard's disease, but to the manner in which for years he had suffered Richard's time to be employed in the unprofitable task of straightening out his father's perpetually involved finances. He knew that this must be the principal reason why his son had never married. He spoke to Fitzwilliam of the "noble, generous and heroic friendship" which his son had shown him: "This was among the causes of his being so little known to the world. But it is known to God, and will by Him be rewarded, whilst I am left to the just punishment of a fruitless repentance."

He told ¹⁴ the Duke of Portland: "I am as a man dead . . . I have no one earthly interest of my own." As a dead man he thanked the Duke for all his past

kindness to himself, and to his brother. From that time until his death, Burke's letters and writings were sprinkled with poignant allusions to his loss, and a deep instinct told him that he was not destined long to survive the "hope of his house," the "prop of his age," his "other and better self." When at the end of August, he received Pitt's letter, announcing that adequate financial provision was to be made for his ease in retirement by a grateful country, Burke's agony broke forth anew, and he cried ¹⁵ :

"Alas ! This is but watering old withered stumps : the fresh young shoot which should have drawn nourishment from the dew of this bounty, is torn away."

He wrote ¹⁶ to Walker King on the same occasion :

"Oh, my dear friend, how many pangs attend this satisfaction ! That he, for whom I lived, did not live to see this, and to dispose of money so justly his. Oh, pray for my pardon !"

Such money as Richard had earned had gone into the common purse of the Burkes, and Edmund, after his manner, sat down to moralize his grief and despair in a note ¹⁷ which was preserved among his papers :

"When I consider that his natural gay season of enjoyment was clouded with cares and solitudes which more fitly belonged to me, and were caused by my faults, and chained down by unworthy occupations, I cannot help impressing it on all parents, who are but too apt to think more of what their children owe to them than of what they owe to their children, to consider with more than usual seriousness, everything which, by self-indulgence, dissipates and distracts their affairs. . . . Parents, in the order of Providence, are made for their children, and not their children for them."

Burke added that although his son had found himself

involved in all his father's debts and difficulties, and had never in his life committed any similar follies of his own, he had never uttered one word of reproach against his father :

“ It is known to my intimate and confidential friends, how sorely I felt for these, my faults, and for his situation. They know that on the first favourable turn of fortune I was unalterably resolved to make some amends to him by a ‘ bona fide ’ retreat ; to put myself into his hands, and to substitute him in everything, public or private, for myself. A poor retribution ! but one which my offences towards God and towards him, have not suffered me to make. It was indeed too much for me. I looked to it, in prospect, as the crowning felicity of my life. . . . ”

While Richard lived he had shared his father's purse and he therefore died insolvent. The Receiver-Generalship of certain Land Revenues which he and Walker King had held jointly since 1783 had always been regarded by King as a sinecure belonging in reality to Richard alone. King now formally declared that he had always held his moiety of this office in trust for Richard. At Richard's death large sums of money were owing to the Crown in respect of the office which he had enjoyed ; Richard had insured the lives of himself and King, or the life of the survivor, for five thousand pounds, but it was obvious that such a sum would not be sufficient to pay off the arrears. Richard Burke had left everything to his mother, and accordingly, in January, 1797, a deed ¹⁸ was drawn up whereby Jane Burke, with Edmund's consent, resigned into King's hands her interest in the sinecure which Richard had held, and agreed to indemnify King against any losses to which he might be subjected, on account of the arrears due to the Crown. King, in return, agreed to

continue to pay, himself, the premiums on the insurance policy which Richard had taken out, and also to advance immediately fifteen hundred pounds towards the discharge of the arrears. Walker King and French Laurence to some extent took Richard's place in assisting Edmund with the management of his private affairs. The principal matter which required arranging at the moment when Richard died was that of the pension. On August 30th, 1794, Pitt wrote ¹⁹ to inform Burke that the King had granted him a Civil List pension of one thousand two hundred pounds a year ; the pension was for his life and that of Mrs. Burke, and was to date from January 5th, 1793. Pitt at the same time announced that, when Parliament met, a proposal would at once be made to confer another and larger annuity on Burke by means of a Parliamentary grant. Burke sent ²⁰ Pitt's letter to Fitzwilliam the next day, and on the strength of the promises which Pitt had made accepted Fitzwilliam's offer to lend him three thousand pounds which were absolutely essential for his immediate relief. A week or two later he borrowed a further fifteen hundred pounds on the same security. Burke said that he had been tormented by the demands which were made upon him, which gave him no truce ; he added that he hated the necessity "of overloading a friend who has already done more by far than the calls of the most exalted friendship could require."

He told ²¹ Pitt that what had been done for him was not merely convenient but necessary, and he thanked him privately for the architect's work which he had undertaken in conserving a ruin which it would never be possible to repair. However, when Parliament met, Pitt found Burke's enemies so active that he shrank from his intention of asking Parliament for a further grant. Dundas offered to go on but, after more than

BURKE IS PENSIONED

a year's delay, Burke had to be content with two further annuities from the Crown, each for three lives, amounting to two thousand five hundred pounds a year out of the West Indian $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. fund. Burke's total pension thus amounted to three thousand seven hundred pounds a year, of which one thousand two hundred pounds was for his life and that of Mrs. Burke, and two thousand five hundred pounds for three lives. There was accordingly some prospect that, in due course, after his own death and that of Mrs. Burke, all his debts would eventually be discharged. Burke felt keenly the necessity to which he was subjected of accepting a further pension from the Crown instead of from Parliament. But since he had borrowed money on the strength of Pitt's promises it was too late for him to draw back. On November 13th, 1795, during a debate on Pitt's Treason Bill, Bedford and Lauderdale insinuated in the Lords that Burke had been bought by the Crown, the corrupt influence of which he had formerly denounced, and that he had betrayed his former policy of public economy. Burke replied to these attacks upon his pension in one of the most brilliantly successful political pamphlets which have ever been written. It was addressed to Fitzwilliam, and entitled, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796). In this pamphlet Burke's style attained its highest as well as its most characteristic pitch of excellence. Several of the best passages have already been quoted in other contexts :

"I was not," Burke pointed²² out, "like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator. . . . At every step of my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed) and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that

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I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws, and the whole system of its interests, both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even, for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand."

Burke observed ²³ that the Duke might very well have enquired into the subject of the grants made by the Crown to his own family before he rose in the House of Lords to attack the small reward for long years of patient service which had been granted to another :

"The grants to the House of Russell were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the Crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray, everything of him and about him is from the Throne. Is it for *him* to question the dispensation of the Royal favour ? "

Burke showed ²⁴ that it was pure foolery for noble and wealthy youths like Bedford to flirt with Fox and toy with Jacobin principles : "His Grace's landed possessions are irresistibly inviting to an agrarian experiment. They are a downright insult upon the rights of man. They are more extensive than the territory of many of the Grecian republics ; and they are without comparison more fertile than most of them. There are now republics in Italy, in Germany, and in Switzerland, which do not possess anything like so fair and ample a



"Pity the Sorrows of a Poor old Man."

Wide Stone in Bloomsbury Square.

domain. There is scope for seven philosophers to proceed in their analytical experiments upon Harrington's seven different forms of republics, in the acres of this one Duke." He drew another ludicrous picture of the young Duke, comparing him to "the print of the poor ox that we see in the shop-windows of Charing Cross." He called him a "poor innocent," fawning upon the "sans-culotte carcase butchers and the philosophers of the shambles," who were already "pricking their dotted lines upon his hide," and who already had the knife half out of the sheath, in order to divide him, "alive as he is, and thinking no harm in the world," into "rumps and sirloins and briskets, and into all sorts of pieces for roasting, boiling and stewing":

"Is it not a singular phenomenon . . . that, all the while they are measuring *him*, his Grace is measuring *me*,—is invidiously comparing the bounty of the Crown with the deserts of the defender of his order?"

The pamphlet concluded with a panegyric upon Bedford's uncle, Admiral Lord Keppel, Burke's devoted friend:

"Feeling the loss of Lord Keppel at all times, at no time did I feel it so much as on the first day when I was attacked in the House of Lords."

The question of Fitzwilliam's departure for Ireland, to take up his Viceroyalty, precipitated a Government crisis of the first magnitude which came within an ace of breaking up the Coalition. Fitzwilliam, as Burke was constrained to admit,²⁵ had acted with great lack of discretion. The Secretaryship of State for the Home Department, which had been given to Portland when the Coalition Ministry was formed in July, 1794, included Ireland in its province. Fitzwilliam regarded that kingdom as a Whig perquisite, and he proceeded to anticipate Westmorland's departure by making his

arrangements in advance. He despatched innumerable letters ; he granted a series of interviews to Irish politicians ; he solicited the support of Grattan and openly announced that he was about to succeed to the Viceroyalty, and that he proposed to institute a drastic change of men and measures. Fitzwilliam, who was very much under Burke's influence, was a weak man, extremely upright and well-meaning. He was imbued with Burke's passion for destroying the well-spring of Irish corruption, once for all. Burke, who knew Fitzwilliam's character, was in an excellent position to have counselled caution had he felt so disposed, and he cannot, therefore, escape a share of the responsibility for the disasters which followed. Fitzwilliam's proceedings were so imprudent and precipitate that Pitt became thoroughly alarmed, while Dublin Castle hummed with a chorus of indignant protest. Fitzwilliam desired to dismiss Fitzgibbon, the Irish Chancellor, and others of Pitt's Tory following, and to replace them by the Ponsonbys, the most eminent of the Irish Whigs. Pitt deeply resented this design. He was not prepared to agree that anything which had been said at the time of the formation of the Coalition could be enlarged to cover any material change in the system whereby Ireland was governed, or in the supreme control over the Irish administration which he himself enjoyed as head of the Government. On October 16th, 1794, Burke wrote ²⁶ to Windham :

“ Lord Fitzwilliam cannot shrink into his shell again without being thought a light man, in whom no person can place any confidence. If, on the other hand, he takes the sword, not only without power, but with a direct negative put upon his power, he is a Lord-Lieutenant disgraced and degraded. With infinite

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sorrow I say it—with inexpressible sorrow—he must resign. If he does, the Duke of Portland must resign too.”

Burke pointed out that Ireland was then in the forefront of the politics of Europe: “Whether you regard it offensively, or defensively, Ireland is known in France. Communications have been opened, and more will be opened. Ireland will be a strong dyke to keep out Jacobinism, or a broken bank to let it in.”

Burke said that he gave his advice as a dying man, who was eager to make up his account with his Creator. He was broken-hearted at the direction which events were taking. If the Ministry were permitted to break up, the national unity in face of the French pestilence would be weakened: if Portland and Fitzwilliam gave way, a new lease of life would be given to the abominable system of corruption in Ireland:

“This is dreadful! dreadful!”—Burke told ²⁷ Windham, in a second letter later the same day, “beyond the loss of a general battle. I now despair completely. I begin to think that God, who most surely regards the least of His creatures as well as the greatest, took what was dearest to me to Himself in a good time. Adieu!”

Four days later he had completely changed his advice. He told ²⁸ Windham that Portland and Fitzwilliam ought to remain in office until they were turned out, which he thought would be certain to happen. In this way, as he wrote ²⁹ to Fitzwilliam, they would be able to manœuvre Pitt into a position in which “the Jobbers will appear to be fighting for their Jobs, and you will appear to be what you are, Victims offered at the shrine of Corruption.”

In the last resort, Burke showed ³⁰ Fitzwilliam that

he was willing, if necessary, to sacrifice the cause of Ireland temporarily to the necessities of the war, and of the anti-Jacobin cause : “ I was indeed most anxious,” he said as soon as the crisis was passed, “ that nothing should happen to break up the Ministry at this moment. I was nearly as anxious that Ireland should be placed under an upright and resolute direction. I am sure it is safe in your hands. . . .”

So long as the crisis lasted, however, Burke was in such an agony of mind that he was really incapable of giving rational advice :

“ I am very miserable,” he told Windham,—“tossed by public upon private griefs, and by private upon public. Oh ! have pity on yourselves ! and may the God whose Counsels are so mysterious in the Moral World (even more than in the Natural) guide you through all these labyrinths.”

A compromise was at length effected, partly through Burke’s agency. He went ³¹ with Grattan to see Fitzgibbon, the Irish Chancellor, on Fitzwilliam’s behalf, as a preliminary to a meeting between Fitzwilliam and Pitt. Burke and Grattan assured Fitzgibbon that Fitzwilliam had no intention of dismissing him, and promised him that although Fitzwilliam would never depart from his plan of reforming the Government of Ireland, he would never pursue it “ otherwise than by the most temperate mode of proceeding.” They said that neither Portland nor Fitzwilliam had ever considered Ireland “ as a thing separate from the general mass of the King’s Government.” In reporting these conversations to Fitzwilliam Burke told him that : “ If anything could tend to make me lay down my sorrowful grey hairs in the grave with peace, it would be to see an anti-Jacobin Administration firmly united and solidly

settled, and to see my native land under the Government of the best and wisest man that either Country possesses."

Once the quarrel had been bridged, Fitzwilliam was instructed to prevent the question of Catholic emancipation from being brought forward, if he could, and only to give it his countenance in case the situation became such as to leave him no option. He privately disavowed any intention to introduce a drastic change of system. When the quarrel was composed, Burke was immensely relieved. Fitzwilliam constantly asked his advice upon matters which had arisen inside the Cabinet and outside it, and Burke constantly returned to the same theme : he urged Fitzwilliam to end the job system, and to treat the patronage of the Crown as a trust which was placed in his hand. It was not to be used for favour, or affection, but as a means of attracting to the support of Government, men of weight, integrity and ability :

" I for one," Burke wrote,³⁰ " will never recommend to your Lordship, at this time, any one person, for any one object, great or small, military, ecclesiastical, legal, or financial. I do not know how I should be entitled to do so, as our connection hitherto consisted in nothing but the receipt of favours on the one hand, and the returning them by no sort of service on the other. Perhaps, when you have first done all that is necessary for the support of your Government (your first care and your first duty) and then provided for all your friends, I may venture to solicit Lord Milton or Mr. Dundas, your secretaries, for such trifling things, for such trifling persons, as it may not be worth while to present directly to the Chief Governor ; assuring you that they shall not (for anything I now see) *be* more or *for* more than I had reason to think Mr. Douglas, from mere private friendship to me, would have taken and done

under that old system. But I must apologize for spending so many lines on a subject which, whether hereafter attended to or not, does not signify a straw."

Fitzwilliam landed at Dublin on January 4th, 1795 ; six weeks later he was recalled for having exceeded his authority. When that event occurred the last chance vanished of carrying through a full reconciliation from above between the English and the Irish peoples. Thenceforward the conduct of the cause of Ireland passed from the hands of men like Burke and Grattan into the hands of men of a different mould : the lead was thenceforth taken by fanatical men of small culture and narrow views, who were resolute in pursuit of their ends and careless of the means which they employed in order to attain them. Fitzwilliam's indiscreet behaviour during the months which preceded his arrival in Dublin had caused hopes to spring up all over Ireland which it was impossible for him to satisfy. Pitt might well have seen that Fitzwilliam and Catholic emancipation had become practically synonymous terms. Fitzwilliam landed on a Sunday : he spent Monday in bed, and on Tuesday he decided that the Catholic question was urgent, and that emancipation must be put through at once. On Wednesday he dismissed Beresford, a powerful official, and confidential friend of Pitt, from his position at the Revenue Board. On the same day he decided on the dismissal of Wolfe from his office of Attorney-General in order to make room for George Ponsonby. Other dismissals followed, but that of Beresford was characterized by Pitt as " an open breach of a most solemn promise," which threatened to disrupt the basis of the Coalition between the Tories and the Portland Whigs. Beresford was on the Treasury establishment and his nominal chief was not Fitzwilliam, but

Pitt, in his capacity of First Lord of the Treasury. Fitzwilliam informed the Cabinet at once that he proposed to push through Catholic emancipation because he thought that the times demanded it. His announcement was received in an ominous silence which he chose to regard as implying consent. Beresford crossed to England, and laid his complaints before Pitt, who wrote ³² on February 9th, to remonstrate with Fitzwilliam. By the same mail Fitzwilliam received a letter from Portland, questioning the expediency of conceding full Catholic emancipation in a hurry, and counselling caution. On February 16th Portland formally warned Fitzwilliam that he considered emancipation inexpedient at that time. Fitzwilliam now seemed to lose his head. He sent Portland a lengthy letter of expostulation, and he told Pitt, without attempting to substantiate the charge, that Beresford had been guilty of malversation. The Cabinet acted promptly: on February 19th, Fitzwilliam was recalled. On that day Burke informed ³³ Grattan that if Catholic emancipation was not allowed to go through, the first descent of ten thousand Frenchmen on Ireland would separate Ireland from England for ever. Burke hoped against hope that the dispute might be composed, and Fitzwilliam saved to redeem Ireland by his policy. He counselled patience, and urged ³⁴ Fitzwilliam, too late, on March 2nd, 1795, "not to fall on the question of a job for or against any man." As soon, however, as he was convinced that the situation was hopeless, Burke threw caution to the winds; he urged ³⁵ Fitzwilliam, if he would save his fame, to stand fast by the principles for the sake of which he had been condemned:

"The business is now over," he said; "English Government is subverted in your person. But a new

scene opens, and a splendid part remains for you to act . . . You are indeed, most emphatically, alone. When business depends upon co-operation for its effect, this is a great misfortune ; but when reputation is to be preserved, it is no small advantage. I speak from my personal experience. No man can fully and effectually defend his own fame whilst he is obliged to any arrangement except those of decorum with regard to other people."

It was strange that Burke, who was so eloquent an exponent of the merits of Party Government, should have been temperamentally unfitted for team work himself. Burke warned Fitzwilliam that an attempt was about to be made, through Lady Fitzwilliam, to make him betray his principles : " The violent storm which has hitherto blown has only made you clasp your cloak more firmly about you. But the sun will very speedily shine, and let us see whether it will induce you to strip yourself naked. You are now to be soothed. . . . There is nothing to make your mind easy that will not be done."

The short episode of Fitzwilliam's Viceroyalty forms a tragic page in the history of Anglo-Irish relations : it ended in failure and recrimination. Fitzwilliam complained ³² to Carlisle of the cruel treatment which he had received at the hands of Portland, whose judgment had, he held, been subverted. As to Pitt, he roundly declared : " I have the glory of being objectionable to Mr. Pitt—I feel it such. My character is not made to be vile and subservient."

Fitzwilliam, it must be confessed, displayed in office the same defects of judgment and temper which Burke had formerly displayed when entrusted with power ; in the situation in which Fitzwilliam found himself in

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND

Ireland, Burke was a dangerous counsellor. After his recall Fitzwilliam implored Burke not to desert him, and Burke replied ³⁵ :

“ My Lord . . . I abandon my friend ! How could such a thought come into your head ? I abandon you, who am responsible for the advice I gave you to coalite with this Ministry, and to accept your late office of Chief Governor of Ireland ! I abandon you, who (if I could suppose myself in your place) would do the very same things, and more of the same kind ! I abandon you, who would have pulled down much more of that crazy, infected structure that loads my native Country than you have done, and who have advised the permitting any part of it to stand only under pressure of the most rigid and odious necessity ! Before I could abandon you I must first abandon all my opinions, all my feelings, all my principles. . . . Whatever an enfeebled mind in an old and shattered carcase could do I have done for this fortnight past. I thought and do still think Mr. Pitt’s power necessary to the existence of the ancient order in Europe. But that which nothing else could destroy, he may destroy himself. I am indeed overwhelmed with grief and anguish. . . .”

Burke counselled Fitzwilliam to preserve, during the journey home, “ a sober, cool and manly indignation ” with no exchange of compliments on the quayside at Dublin. The people, he said, “ do not comprehend these ceremonies in cases of desperate hostility. They puzzle their understandings.” At the same time Burke sent Grattan a letter which was drafted in his most magniloquent style :

“ My dear Sir,” he wrote,³⁶ “ I have just now received your letter. Your liberal partiality is pleased to con-

sider the very scanty justice that I am able to deal out to your abilities, virtues, and services, as though it were a sort of Bounty. Since you have made such an offering of value by your acceptance, enjoy it. This poor, vapid primrose, that comes out on the sunny side of an old mouldering bank, ready to tumble into the ditch, has all its value from its season. It appears in the rear of winter, amidst the blighting winds of calumny and persecution. By and bye it will be forgot ; I hope and trust it will be forgot amidst the luxury of colours and of odours which your poor Country, warmed into gratitude, will shower upon your head, from all the pomp and profusion of a genial May ! God send it ! I hardly know how to prognosticate that, or any other good."

So wrote one great Irishman to another on the morrow of Fitzwilliam's recall. Burke said that he felt he knew the country in which he was born : " There are many and striking exceptions, but the Protestants are generally corrupt, and jobbers, as people long possessed of a monopoly of power are apt to be. The Catholics are incorrupt, at least as yet, but they are light and frivolous, and inconsistent,—in short, they are *the People*."

Burke jested grimly to Grattan about the landed security which he was now able to give for his opinions : " much more surely than any of them can do with their great real estates. The landed security I mean is the grave. . . . All these things dispose me to it more and more. My inheritance is anticipated.—My son is gone before me to take possession. . . ."

Burke wrote ³⁷ to Langrishe :

" What a sad thing it is that the grand instructor, Time, has not yet been able to teach the grand lesson of his own value, and that in every question of moral

and political prudence it is the choice of the moment which renders the measure serviceable or useless, noxious or salutary." He had, he said, been convinced that the time was ripe for Catholic emancipation, but "My sanguine hopes are blasted, and I must consign my feelings on that terrible disappointment to the same patience in which I have been obliged to bury the vexation I suffered on the defeat of the other great, just and honourable Causes in which I have had some share, and which have given more of dignity than of peace and advantage to a long, laborious life."

The recall of Fitzwilliam was rather the occasion than the cause of the troubles which descended thereafter upon Ireland. As Burke more than once explained ³⁸ to Fitzwilliam, the question of the eligibility of the Catholics for seats in Parliament was almost entirely a sentimental one: "Such is the state of Election Interests, and of all Interests in Ireland, that if *three* Catholic members were chosen out of the three hundred, it is as many as could be rationally calculated. . . . As to the House of Lords, I believe *one* Peer would take his seat. . . . This is all that I conceive there is in that question." What was really needed was a change in the system under which the mass of the people of Ireland was groaning—a relief from tithes, paid to an alien Church, and from oppressive rents.

"It is not about Popes," Burke once told ³⁹ his son, "but about potatoes that the minds of this unhappy people are agitated. It is not from the spirit of zeal, but the spirit of whiskey that these wretches act."

It was scandalous that a poor clown who was unwilling to pay three pounds in rent for his acre of potatoes, and another fourteen shillings in tithe, should necessarily be

SOWING THE WHIRLWIND

supposed to be eager to overturn the foundations of Church and State. Fitzwilliam's agitation of the Catholic question was regarded as a symbol of better times for the ancient people of the Kingdom, and the tragedy of the whole disastrous episode lay in the fact that it aroused hopes which, when unfulfilled, produced a violent and convulsive upheaval. Even if Pitt had permitted Fitzwilliam to proceed with his plan of Catholic emancipation, George III would have opposed it, for he believed that his Coronation Oath stood in the way of his consent. The King's objection might or it might not have proved insuperable if Pitt had stood firmly behind Fitzwilliam: the Catholic religion had long before been established in the French-speaking Province of Quebec by Act of Parliament. But when the Catholic question was added to other difficulties the effect on the King's mind was most unfortunate, and he personally pressed Fitzwilliam's recall upon the Cabinet. After that inauspicious event, civil war in Ireland simmered for more than two years beneath the surface until it burst into a flame of rebellion in May, 1798, and led directly to the Act of Union of 1800.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Eclipse

AFTER Fitzwilliam's recall the brief remainder of Burke's life was uneventful and unhappy. It was spent mostly at Beaconsfield with the interruption of occasional visits to Bath. Burke watched French arms sweep across Europe like a broom through a roomful of old cobwebs, but at sea England was victorious and the overseas Empire was enriched. In the West Indies some valuable acquisitions were made, but Jacobin principles had infected the native inhabitants and an orgy of violence and massacre resulted. The French conquest and absorption of Holland was in some respects advantageous to England, for it exposed the Dutch Colonial Empire to British attacks: Ceylon and the Cape were the two most splendid prizes which fell to British arms during 1795 and 1796. But on the Continent of Europe, Napoleon's star was rising, and Pitt's Coalition of Allied Powers was shattered into fragments. Prussia came to terms with the French Republic in April, 1795, and was followed by Sweden in June, and by Spain in July. In Italy Bonaparte carried everything before him in a series of astonishing victories. In these circumstances Pitt did his best to come to terms with the French, and he thereby provoked three heated philippics from Burke—the Letters on a Regicide Peace. Burke called upon his countrymen to make no peace with the Cannibal Republic, which was founded on crime, and existed by a system of murder,

robbery and oppression : " To be at peace with robbery," he wrote,¹ " is to be an accomplice with it." Nevertheless, Pitt sent Lord Malmesbury on a mission to Paris with instructions to negotiate an honourable peace if he could. Malmesbury confessed² to Canning that a *bon mot* by Burke had done his mission harm. Somebody said that Malmesbury's journey to Paris had been a slow one, on account of the bad roads : " No wonder," said Burke, " as he went the whole way on his knees ! " The French believed that they were strong enough to reduce England by arms, and on December 19th, 1796, Malmesbury was ordered to leave the country within forty-eight hours. Four days later a French expedition sailed for Ireland. The expedition was defeated, and a more formidable attempt against England herself in February, 1797, was foiled likewise by Jervis and Nelson at the battle of St. Vincent. Despite these reverses the French remained undaunted, and after Austria, chastised by Bonaparte, had crept out of the war in April, 1797, all the resources of France were concentrated for the attack upon England. In that same month the fleet was paralysed by a mutiny which lasted for five weeks, and was spread over the whole world. England was in the most deadly peril, but her enemies, happily, had no idea of her condition until it was too late for them to profit by it. Although Burke's physical powers were failing his mental energy remained unimpaired, and he followed all these exciting events with the closest attention. The harvest of 1795 was a miserable failure, and in November he placed in Pitt's hands an economic pamphlet—*Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*. In this common-sense work he advocated,³ amongst other things, a moderate use of gin by the poor, not on account of its nutritive properties, but as a stimulant to their digestive organs.

Burke's family life was necessarily clouded during the closing years, although French Laurence and Walker King were constantly with him, and were almost like sons to him. William Burke, who had brought back with him from India a native boy of whom he was inordinately fond, was nearly always at Beaconsfield, but he suffered from strokes and cannot have been the most cheerful of companions. William outlived Edmund by a little more than a year, and died, insolvent, in the Isle of Man. In August, 1795, Burke had to break to his niece, Mary Haviland, the news that her husband had died of fever in Martinique. Mary Haviland was about to become a mother, and Burke wrote to her, after the birth of her son, calling her "My dear little Mary" and commending her to the blessing and protection of Almighty God. The Havilands were fairly prosperous, and Mary Haviland's mother-in-law pressed Burke to accept some pecuniary assistance, as she had more money than she required. Burke, of course, firmly but cordially refused. In November, 1794, Burke's first cousin, Edmund Nagle, was knighted. The Admiral was a frequent and welcome visitor to Beaconsfield, and Edmund wrote,⁴ characteristically, to William, who was then at Bath, to inform him of the event :

"My dearest friend. . . . You see they have made Nagle a Knight. It was done as handsomely as possible. It was not his own seeking I assure you. The King spoke to him most graciously. He gave him a little shake of the fist, when he kissed hands, a thing I never heard of his doing to anyone. . . . These are the pleasant things of the old world, and let us take them whilst the old world continues. A worse is coming."

With Fitzwilliam Burke continued to correspond frequently, and at length, upon Ireland and all manner of

subjects. He was bitter about the "knot of low jobbers" who were left to misgovern Ireland: "The rats," he said,⁵ "are not tolerated for the sake of the ship, but the ship is kept up for the sake of the rats."

When, in March, 1796, it was arranged that Hastings should receive a loan of fifty thousand pounds for eighteen years, without interest, and that he should receive an annuity of four thousand pounds for twenty-eight and a half years as from June, 1785, Burke was roused to a passion of indignation:

"The proceedings about Hastings," he told⁶ Fitzwilliam, "are such that I do not feel myself at all at my ease. I don't like to seem to have compromised the blood of India, and to see the whole end in a pension to the accuser, and another to the accused. It is flagitious. I cannot bear it. I will come out again. I will appeal by petition to the House of Commons. I wish to God you would come hither. My wife is so terribly ill that for a few days I cannot go to town. . . ."

Burke regarded the labours which he had undertaken on behalf of the peoples of India as his most enduring title to fame. He wrote⁷ to French Laurence, on July 28th, 1796, to recall to his mind the solemn charge which he had given him before he retired from Parliament: "I fancy I must make you the sole operator, in a work in which, even if I were enabled to undertake it, you must have been ever the assistance on which alone I could rely. Let not this cruel, daring, unexampled act of publick corruption, guilt, and meanness, go down to a posterity, perhaps as careless as the present race, without its due animadversion. . . . Let my endeavours to save the Nation from that shame and guilt by my monument; the only one I will ever have. Let everything I have done, said, or written, be forgotten, but this. I have struggled with the great and the little

upon this point during the greater part of my active life ; and I wish, after my death, to have my defiance of the judgments of those who consider the dominion of this glorious Empire, given by an incomprehensible dispensation of the Divine Providence into our hands, as nothing more than an opportunity of gratifying, for the lowest of their purposes, the lowest of their passions—and that for such poor rewards and for the most part indirect and silly bribes, as indicate even more the folly, than the corruption of these infamous and contemptible wretches. I blame myself exceedingly for not having employed the last year in this work, and beg forgiveness of God for such a neglect. I had strength enough for it if I had not wasted some of it in compromising grief with drowsiness and forgetfulness. . . . But you are made to continue all that is good of me ; and to augment it with the various resources of a mind fertile in virtues, and cultivated with every sort of talent and of knowledge. Above all, make out the cruelty of this pretended acquittal, but in reality this barbarous and inhuman condemnation of whole tribes and nations, and of all the classes they contain. If ever Europe recovers its civilization, that work will be useful. Remember ! Remember ! Remember ! ”

Burke's hopes of posterity having been blasted by the death of his son, he found a certain pathetic satisfaction in making his son's friend, Laurence, the repository of all his earthly wishes and cares. He induced Fitzwilliam, in August, 1796, to bring Laurence into Parliament for the close borough of Peterborough, which Fitzwilliam controlled. Fitzwilliam consented, but he made^s it quite clear to Burke, that after the way in which Pitt had treated him he would lose no opportunity which might present itself of doing “ essential injury ” to Pitt's power or of rendering “ effectual service ” to that

REMEMBER ! REMEMBER ! REMEMBER !

of Fox. Actually, so long as Burke lived he was unlikely to do anything which did not have Burke's approval, but Burke, although his mind remained unimpaired, felt the feebleness of age stealing prematurely over his body. He lived in such retirement that stories about him began to circulate in London. It was said that he had gone quite out of his mind—that he was to be seen running about his park at Beaconsfield, screaming at the top of his voice, and kissing the horses and cows. One Member of the House of Lords left town at once in order to test for himself the truth of this remarkable story, which owed its source to a pathetic incident which occurred one day when Burke was strolling across one of his fields. An old and favourite horse of his son's, which had been turned out to graze until the end of its days, came up to Edmund, and nuzzled him ; it looked up into his face with that candid courageous look which horses possess. A flood of memories swept suddenly over Edmund ; he flung his arms about the neck of his son's horse, weeping and uttering groans of anguish, and refusing to be comforted.

Burke's principal occupation during the closing months of his life was concerned with the foundation of a school at Penn, close to Beaconsfield, for the children of French refugees. The fathers were mostly serving with the British forces and Burke succeeded in inducing Pitt to allot a suitable house which was capable of accommodating sixty boys and their tutors, and an annual grant of six hundred pounds. Burke enlisted the interest of his friends in this project, and, besides himself, the trustees were Portland, Loughborough (the Lord Chancellor), Windham, Walker King and Lord Buckingham. In the admission of the boys preference was given to those whose fathers, or near relations, had fallen on the Allied side in the cause of liberty and justice. The boys wore

a blue uniform, with a white cockade in their hats, inscribed *Vive le Roi*. Those boys whose fathers had fallen had the inscription traced upon a scarlet label ; those who had lost other near relations had it traced upon a black label. When the legitimate Monarchy was restored in France in 1814 the French Government took over from the British Treasury the cost of maintaining the school. In August, 1820, the school was discontinued. Burke rode or drove over to Penn daily, as long as he had the strength, and sometimes twice a day. The school opened with twenty boys in April, 1796. There were three tutors—all of them French—and the chief of these gave Burke a good deal of trouble. Writing to his friend Hussey, the future Catholic Bishop of Waterford, Burke complained⁹ that the Headmaster was “a poor, obstinate, ignorant clown—neither more nor less.” The refugee Bishop of Laon, who had provided Burke with the tutors, was resolved that the school should be conducted “on the principles of a seminary of monks.” The Bishop was interested in nothing outside the boys’ religious education, and he opposed the introduction of any English tutor whatsoever. Burke asked Hussey to provide him with a suitable Catholic tutor who, in order to pacify the Bishop, had better be a priest :

“I really consider,” Burke said, “the idea of forcing the miserable French boys to be foreigners here is little less than downright madness ; the education of them as ecclesiastics, when we have nothing for them but *some* chance of their struggling in *some* part of these Dominions, in a military line, is I think, not less so.”

Burke hoped, while treating the boys’ religion with all due tenderness, “to give them a good dash of English education.” It was in wrestling with such problems as

A POOR, OBSTINATE, IGNORANT CLOWN !

these that much of Burke's time was passed during the remaining months of his life. He received few visitors, but among the few was James Mackintosh, the author of the *Vindiciae Galliae*, formerly one of his most redoubtable opponents. Laurence brought Mackintosh down to Beaconsfield to spend the Christmas of 1796 under Burke's roof. Mackintosh found ¹⁰ Burke, despite his infirmities, playing with children on the carpet, rolling about with them "and pouring out in his gambols the sublimest images, mingled with the most wretched puns." Burke was perfectly composed, and spoke quietly about his approaching end, which he knew could not long be delayed. He said of Fox, "with a deep sigh," that he was a man who was made to be loved. Burke praised very highly indeed Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, saying that it was a greater monument to Johnson's fame than all Johnson's writings put together. When he came away Mackintosh was so much impressed that he remarked that Gibbon might have been cut out of a corner of Burke's mind without anyone noticing the excision.

In the New Year Burke began to grow rapidly feebler ; he was afflicted with a slow-growing cancer of the stomach, and he was not squeamish in describing the symptoms in his letters. The disease was confined apparently to the centre of the stomach, and as the entrance and exit were not affected, the patient suffered comparatively little pain. On January 9th, 1797, he told ¹¹ Windham : "Everything I eat and drink turns to tough phlegm, and storms of wind." As early as October 30th, 1795, he had told ¹² Lord Auckland :

"I can sail no longer. My vessel cannot be said to be even in port. She is wholly condemned and broken up. To have an idea of that vessel you must call to

mind what you have often seen on the Kentish road. Those planks of tough and hardy oak, that used for years to brave the buffets of the Bay of Biscay, are now turned, with their warped grain, and empty trunnion-holes, into very wretched pales for the enclosure of a wretched farmyard."

His correspondence abounded with allusions to his decay : " You follow the last fragments of your poor friend," he told Fitzwilliam, " with the same persevering kindness you have ever shown him, when he was as entire as it pleased Providence to make him."

" Believe me," he ended another letter. " Yours to the last rag of this poor frame." Burke knew that he was dying, and he was content that it should be so. In February, 1797, at the earnest entreaty of his friends, he went to Bath, and remained there until the end of May. The change did him little good, however, and he fretted to be home. On April 17th, William Wilberforce recorded ¹³ in his diary that he called to consult Burke on the day that he heard of the Mutiny at Portsmouth : " The whole scene is now before me. Burke was lying on a sofa, much emaciated ; and Windham, Laurence, and some other friends were round him. The attention shown to Burke by all that party was just like the treatment of Ahithophel of old. It was as if one went to enquire of the oracle of the Lord."

Burke's advice was to sink the mutinous ships by discharging broadsides into them at once if they failed to submit. He said, however, that he had always been an enemy to the press-gang methods which had helped to provoke the trouble. Windham, who was Secretary at War, set off at once for London, with Burke's spirited counsel ringing in his ears.

CONSULTING THE ORACLE

The day before he left Bath, Burke dictated to Mary Leadbeater, Richard Shackleton's daughter, a pathetic letter :

"I feel as I ought to do," he said,¹⁴ "your constant, hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all.—Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain."

Burke returned to Beaconsfield in order to await death. French Laurence was with him at the last, and old Mrs. Crewe came, in order to be a support to Mrs. Burke. William Windham came down on July 5th, and had his last interview with Burke the following day. He found ¹⁵ him very feeble, but "in the same possession of all his faculties as ever." After dinner, on July 6th, Burke asked Windham if he had a print of Reynolds' portrait of his son, which hung in his room. Windham replied that Mrs. Burke had given him one. Burke said that he was going to join his son, whereupon Mrs. Burke said, quietly, that that was not fair to her. Windham had to leave the next morning to attend to his Cabinet duties. On that day French Laurence wrote ¹⁶ to Fitzwilliam :

"It is with the keenest affliction that I have to express my fears that perhaps at the very moment when I am writing, Wisdom, Eloquence, Virtue, Civil Polity, and the Constitution of our Country, have lost the brightest ornament of our age and nation. My latest accounts from Beaconsfield have left me scarce a hope."

Laurence, who was then in London, hurried down to Beaconsfield, and Fox, informed by Fitzwilliam that Burke lay upon his death-bed, expressed a wish for a last interview. Mrs. Burke, in conveying her husband's refusal, said that Edmund was convinced that the

principles which he had upheld were essential to the welfare of the nation, and that he considered that those principles could not be preserved unless he were to show himself willing, at whatever cost to himself, to give proof of the sincerity of his opinions. Burke's refusal to see Fox was an act of Roman austerity which Fox was incapable of understanding.* During the evening of July 8th, Burke reposed upon a sofa in his room, listening, for a time, to one of his favourite essays of Addison which was read to him at his request, and discoursing to those around him upon the awful situation of his country.¹⁷ Shortly after midnight, in the early morning of Sunday, July 9th, 1797, Burke was being assisted to his bed when he collapsed and sank down into the arms of his attendants. After a short struggle, during which he endeavoured to articulate a blessing, Burke died, in the arms of two of his oldest servants and friends, a married couple named Webster, and in the presence of one of his Nagle cousins for whom, by his influence with Windham, he had procured a post in the War Office.

When old Lord Charlemont heard the news in Ireland, he wrote ¹⁸ to Malone :

“ Poor Burke, one of my oldest and best acquaintances and friends. I knew him intimately long before he was a politician, and when, without a crown in his pocket, he was a happy man. I knew him intimately at his first introduction into the political world, when also he was as happy as the adoration of his friends, and a perfect rectitude of conduct, could make him. I have also known him intimately when he was not quite so happy. His abilities were supernatural, and a deficiency

* “ I’ve always found,” Fox said, “ that every Irishman had a piece of potato in his head.”

BURKE DIES

of prudence and political wisdom alone could have kept him within the rank of mortals."

So spoke the mellow wisdom of age. But the young did not talk like that. George Canning wrote ¹⁹ to a friend in Paris, who was attached to another of Malmesbury's fruitless peace missions :

" I ought now to tell you something of what has been passing here, since you left us. There is but one event, but that is an event for the world,—Burke is dead ! How and when the newspapers will tell you. I know the details only from them. Mrs. Crewe, who was at Beaconsfield at the time, wrote only to say that she could not write to me ; for he had among all his great qualities that for which the world did not give him sufficient credit, of creating in those about him very strong attachments, as well as the unbounded admiration which I am every day more and more convinced was his due. It is of a piece with the peddling sense of these days, that it should be determined to be imprudent for the House of Commons to vote him a monument. He is a man that will mark this age, marked as it is, in itself, by events, to all time."

When the news of Burke's death reached London, Parliament was in session. Fox rose in order to propose a public funeral in Westminster Abbey. But Burke had, as Fox knew, left directions in his Will that he should be buried " In the Church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother, and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just."

At Beaconsfield, accordingly, Burke's funeral took place, on Saturday, July 15th, 1797. Mrs. Crewe

superintended the arrangements, and the eight distinguished pall-bearers who assembled to render the last honours to Edmund Burke were—Portland and Devonshire, Windham and Fitzwilliam, Inchiquin * and Sir Gilbert Elliot,† the Lord Chancellor (Loughborough) ‡ and the Speaker of the House of Commons (Henry Addington).§ Burke was buried in one grave with his son and brother ; fifteen years later, in April, 1812, the grave was reopened for the last time in order to receive the remains of Mrs. Burke. A year after her death, the house in which Burke and she had lived for so long was completely destroyed by fire. But shortly before her death Mrs. Burke had sold the place to a neighbour, James Du Pre, for the large sum of thirty-eight thousand five hundred pounds, reserving only the use of the house, and of the grounds, for the remainder of her life, and for a year after her death. In this way the debts which Burke left behind him were finally extinguished. Mrs. Burke's constant companion until the end of her life was her husband's niece, Mary Haviland, formerly Mary French.

So perished Edmund Burke, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, in a lurid, sunset hour of his country's history. England, at his death, was left alone to face the most terrible storm which until that time had arisen upon the Continent of Europe. The last of her Allies, Austria, had just crept, beaten and humiliated, out of the War : the Funds had sunk to a lower point than any which they had touched during the worst days of the American War : supplies were scarce : there was a run on the Bank of England, and cash payments had had to be suspended : Ireland was seething with rebellion : press-gangs, repressive decrees and unprecedented taxa-

* Afterwards Thomond.

† Afterwards Minto.

‡ Afterwards Rosslyn.

§ Afterwards Sidmouth.

BURKE'S FAME

tion were causing discontent at home : the Fleet had mutinied ; and a fresh attempt to negotiate an honourable peace was meeting with no success at all. In this crisis of her fate England was saved by the courage and genius of Pitt and by his instinct for naval affairs. The war against Napoleon continued for eighteen years after Burke's death, and during that time men's minds were necessarily concerned with more urgent objects than the pious duty of caring for Burke's fame. When the long war ended at the Battle of Waterloo, it was found that no Party or body of men existed which felt called upon to cherish Burke's memory. The Tories for two generations wove their loyalties round the heroic figure of Pitt. When that image faded a little they found a new rallying-point in the personality of Benjamin Disraeli. Disraeli owed much to Burke, but the poor little root which it had cost Burke so much vexation and embarrassment to cast at Beaconsfield was quite buried, during the nineteenth century, under a bank of yellow primroses. Neglected by the Tories, Burke fared worse at the hands of the Whigs whom he had so devotedly served. The Whigs regarded Burke as a renegade, and when after the war their fortunes revived, Burke's name had become anathema to them. If Burke had founded a family to cherish his memory, all might have been different : as it was, there was a prophetic ring about certain words which he had used to the Duke of Richmond many years before :

“ You people,” Burke told ²⁰ the Duke, “ of great hereditary trusts and fortunes are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be by the rapidity of our growth and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that while we creep on the ground we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still are but annual plants that perish with our season and leave

no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye like the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. . . .”

There was almost no one after Burke's death who was left to care for his memory, and he founded no school, although it was his life's work to raise the flag of revolt against the main intellectual currents of the century in which he lived. Theories of progress or enlightenment meant nothing to Burke. He sought the living reality which lay behind the stuff of all politics, and he found it, derived directly from God, in the sentiment of nationality and in the race-consciousness of men. The nationality which Burke envisaged was not necessarily confounded with sovereignty. His race-consciousness comprehended all mankind: it was universal, historical and pacific: not jealous, unscientific and proud. Burke was a deeply religious man, and ideas of God, truth, charity, tolerance, chivalry, humanity, informed all his political teaching, as they constituted the substance of his personal religion. Burke's political outlook was not shared by all Englishmen, but it was the outlook of the dominant and most characteristic section of the English people. The instinctive political empiricism of the average Englishman now bears for all time the impress of the character and personality of Edmund Burke. It was Burke's genius which first gave shape and direction to what had formerly been little more than an inchoate mass of ideas, floating in the English mind. This was Burke's greatest achievement, and his legacy to his country. This is the reason why Burke is the most frequently quoted of any statesman who ever served England, although he never sat in any Cabinet, although he was notoriously unpractical, and although it is hard to say whether he would be best described as a Tory

FIVE GREAT BATTLES

or as a Whig. Burke founded no intellectual tradition, although his ideas were reflected for a time by the English "Lake" school—Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. But the banners of the "Lake" poets were soon torn to pieces by the spears of the advancing Victorians; they were replaced by every variety of progressive programme, as though no Burke had ever arisen to interrupt the gradual unfolding of the main currents of eighteenth-century thought. By that time the "great, just and honourable causes" to which Burke's life had been devoted had faded from the memory of mankind. He had battled in the cause of freedom in five main separate fields. He had battled on behalf of English liberties at home; he had battled on behalf of English liberties in America; he had battled on behalf of the liberties of India; he had battled on behalf of civilization against the menace of Jacobinism; he had battled all his life on behalf of Ireland, his native land. In the course of those five tremendous struggles Burke had worn himself to rags, and he died in the belief that he had failed, substantially, in every field. But success or failure are terms which are only applicable to men of straw. Burke had sketched the outlines of a new Imperial grammar, and he had left behind him a body of literature which is so imbued with his spirit and personality that the study of it remains, to this day, the finest school of statecraft which exists. Burke was an "immersed" political thinker of the first rank, who only needed to control the warmth of his feelings in order to become one of the greatest statesmen who ever lived. In too many of his actions Burke's heart ruled his head, but in his writings he disclosed immense, luminous depths of penetration and judgment, and lent life to whatever he touched. The details of the causes for which Burke contended are far less important, in the

last analysis, than the values which they embodied. Burke was a crusader, all his life, on behalf of ordered liberty, against every species of injustice and oppression. Since mortal men are condemned to see mortal events "through a glass, darkly," Burke was, in effect, pronouncing his own epitaph, when he exclaimed at Bristol, in 1780, "What shadows we are ; and what shadows we pursue." Nevertheless, it would ill become a loyal son of Oxford to forget that here among the shadows there are ways of being magnificently wrong, and of fighting in a losing cause when it is believed to be a just one, which are far more honourable to those who are mistaken, and ultimately of far greater service to the cause of civilization than a mere barren rightness—a righteousness divorced from humanity. Burke took his stand upon a foundation of human nature and political realism. From that firm ground he conducted ²¹ his campaign against all doctrinaire theories, because, "in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false." The study of politics is an art, and not a science ; no exact rules can ever be laid down for it. But to those who may wish to acquire that art, a knowledge of Burke is the beginning of wisdom.

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Chapter One—The Youth of a Prophet

- ¹ There has been some dispute, in the absence of any baptismal record, over the exact date of Burke's birth. The coming into force of the Calendar New Style Act on September 3rd, 1752, introduced a complication, but I have no doubt that the date given in the text is the correct one. cf. Samuels: *Early Life, Correspondence, and Writings of Edmund Burke*, pp. 4-5 ; also *Notes and Queries*, Vol. 172, No. 25, June 19th, 1937.
- ² *Leadbeater Papers*, ii, p. 100 (Edmund Burke to Richard Shackleton ; October 28th, 1766).
- ³ On the authority of Burke's intimate friend, Richard Shackleton. cf. Samuels: *Early Life* etc., p. 402.
- ⁴ A most attractive account of Edmund's schooldays, and other matters, is given by Richard Shackleton's daughter, Mrs. Leadbeater, in *The Annals of Ballitore* (Leadbeater Papers, i). cf. particularly pp. 47 and 50.
- ⁵ Prior: *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 32 (Letter from William Dennis, one of Burke's friends ; November 21st, 1747).
- ⁶ *Corr.*, i, p. 21 (March 21st, 1747).
- ⁷ Samuels: *Early Life* etc., pp. 69, 77, 84.
- ⁸ A minute-book, covering the first three months of this Club's existence, is preserved in the Library of the Trinity College Historical Society. Much the greater part of it is in Burke's handwriting. It is printed in full by Samuels: *Early Life* etc., pp. 225-95.
- ⁹ Samuels: *Early Life* etc., p. 239.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 226.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 297-329. All the thirteen numbers are printed in full.
- ¹² *ibid.*, pp. 331-95. All the seven pamphlets are printed in full.
- ¹³ *ibid.*, p. 373.
- ¹⁴ *Works*, vii, p. 477 (Abridgement of English History).
- ¹⁵ See note 2 above.

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- ¹⁶ John Bourke, a London merchant, was an intimate friend who introduced Burke to Philip Francis in 1773. A great many Burkes were engaged in commerce in the West Indies and Canada, and the Irish clan feeling would probably have been sufficient to serve Edmund as an introduction to any one of them if he had so wished. Edmund's younger brother, Richard, was engaged in commerce between London and the West Indies at least as early as 1757.
- ¹⁷ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ¹⁸ *Corr.*, i, p. 316.
- ¹⁹ *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (Ed. Parkes), ii, p. 103.
- ²⁰ Several of these effusions are preserved at Wentworth Woodhouse.
- ²¹ *Corr.*, i, p. 28 (Edmund Burke to Richard Shackleton ; September 28th, 1752).
- ²² Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ²³ Prior says (*Life of Burke* ; 5th edition, p. 49) that she was a Presbyterian, and that her mother was a Presbyterian also. I have preferred to follow Richard Shackleton's clear statement that she was a Catholic, like her father, before her marriage (cf. Samuels : *Early Life* etc., p. 402), which was also the opinion of Burke's contemporaries.
- ²⁴ Samuels : *Early Life* etc., p. 211 (William Dennis to Richard Shackleton ; August 5th, 1757). Burke's friend Dennis told Shackleton that Burke was continually visiting Lord Egmont, and that he was well known to Lord Granville. He was supposed to be writing pamphlets for these "Great Ones." In his *Eloquence of the British Senate*, i, p. 521, Hazlitt quoted one passage from a speech made by Egmont on May 22nd, 1753, against the Jews' Naturalization Bill. This speech, in Hazlitt's view, disclosed more real depth of thought than anything else which he had found in all the records of the Debates which he had examined. Hazlitt commented : "There may be observations of equal value in Burke, but there is no single observation in any part of his Works more profound, original, acute and comprehensive ; it may indeed be said to contain the germ of all his political reasoning." Egmont had denounced the intrusion of abstract theories, and metaphysical claptrap, into the discussion of a simple concrete issue. It is tempting to suppose that he may have been assisted by Burke in drafting this speech.

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- ²⁵ Emin : *Autobiography*, p. 90.
- ²⁶ The date of Burke's marriage has hitherto been a mystery, but with some difficulty I have traced Burke's family Bible, which is now in the possession of a collateral descendant—Mrs. Pixley, Hill Place, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey. The date given in the text is clearly incised in Burke's handwriting. cf. also *Notes and Queries*, 6th series, Vol. 5, April 13th, 1882.
- ²⁷ The date of the first appearance of this work has hitherto been given as 1756, following Prior. I think, however, that a note by Miss Helen Drew in the issue of *Modern Language Notes*, Baltimore, U.S.A., for January, 1933, finally establishes the date given in the text. The appearance of *The Sublime and the Beautiful* was noted in the list of new books in the *Literary Magazine* of April–May, 1757. It was first reviewed in the *Critical Journal* of April, 1757 and in the *Monthly Magazine* of May, 1757. The *London Chronicle* of April 14th–16th, 1757, advertised the book as "about to be published in a few days," and in its second issue after that date—the issue of April 19th–21st, 1757—stated: "This day was published" etc. etc.
- ²⁸ Boswell : *Letters to Temple*, p. 172 (August 14th, 1775).
- ²⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (April 30th, 1782).
- ³⁰ Isham : *Boswell Papers*, Vol. 15, p. 115 (Journal in London ; July 29th, 1785).
- ³¹ *Works*, i, p. 232.
- ³² *Corr.* i, p. 31.
- ³³ Mrs. Climenson : *Life of Mrs. Montagu*, ii, p. 169. cf. also Prior : *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 62.
- ³⁴ Colden Papers, i, p. 80. The New York Assembly had for some time been dissatisfied with Robert Charles, their existing agent ; President Colden, of the New York Assembly, wrote to John Pownall, the Secretary to the Board of Trade and Plantations, on April 5th, 1761, to say that he could not do a greater favour to his Province than by inducing them to appoint a man of Burke's great merit to be their agent. The difficulties were that Charles was popular at Court, and that nothing was known in New York about Burke except that he was a friend of Pownall's. cf. *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, ix, New Series, October, 1893 (Calvin Stebbins : *Burke as Agent of New York*, p. 89).
- ³⁵ Isham : *Boswell Papers*, Vol. 2., p. 268 (Journal in London ;

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April 30th, 1782): "I revised it," Burke declared, "and do not say there is nothing in it by me."

³⁶ Ralph Straus: *Dodsley*, p. 257. The agreement is printed in full.

³⁷ Johnson's *England*, ii, p. 333 (D. Nicholl Smith: *The Newspaper*).

³⁸ Prior: *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 56.

Chapter Two—Public Life

¹ H. Walpole: *Letters* (ed. Toynbee), v, p. 86 (H. Walpole to George Montagu; July 22nd, 1761).

² Burke wrote to Agmondisham Vesey in September, 1760 (*New Monthly Magazine*, xiv, p. 382) to thank him for his help in effecting this reconciliation. He mentioned, in this letter, the receipt of a remittance from his father. There is a tradition that Burke received a present from his father in return for a copy of *The Sublime and the Beautiful* shortly after that work appeared. In the absence of evidence, however, I am inclined to think that this tradition is based upon the remittance referred to in this letter to Vesey, and that Burke's estrangement from his father lasted until the summer of 1760.

³ He died on November 23rd, 1761, leaving an estate worth something less than £1,500; his business, as an attorney, was left to his eldest son, Garret. His will was printed by Samuels: *Early Life . . . of Edmund Burke*, pp. 405-7. The original was destroyed when the Four Courts were burned in Dublin during the rebellion of 1922.

⁴ *Works*, vi, pp. 299 ff. A fragment only exists.

⁵ *Corr.*, i, pp. 41 ff. (An unfinished paper relative to the disturbances in Ireland at the beginning of the reign of George III.)

⁶ *Corr.*, i, p. 46 (March, 1763).

⁷ Hawkins: *Journal*, p. 422.

⁸ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), v, p. 269.

⁹ *ibid.*, iv, p. 26.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, iv, p. 275.

¹¹ *ibid.*, ii, p. 450.

¹² *ibid.*, ii, p. 260.

¹³ *ibid.*, iv, p. 59.

¹⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.

¹⁵ *Corr.*, i, p. 71 (Burke to J. Monck Mason, Esq.; May, 1765).

¹⁶ *Corr.*, i, p. 78 (May 18th, 1765).

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- ¹⁷ cf. Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), i, p. 513. (Appendix E.)
- ¹⁸ cf. Namier: *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, *passim*.
- ¹⁹ Burke composed the epitaph which is engraved upon Rockingham's mausoleum in the park at Wentworth Woodhouse. He said very truly that: "He far exceeded all other Statesmen in the art of drawing together, without the seduction of self-interest, the concurrence and co-operation of the various dispositions and abilities of men whom he assimilated to his character, and associated with his labours."
- ²⁰ *Corr.*, i, p. 317 (Burke to the Bishop of Chester; 1771).
- ²¹ cf. Namier: *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 214, note 1.
- ²² Hardy: *Life of Lord Charlemont*, ii, p. 281.
- ²³ *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), i, p. 236. Namier, in his merciless *Additions and Corrections*, confirms this date (p. 48).
- ²⁴ H. Walpole: *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. Barker), ii, p. 194.
- ²⁵ Wentworth Woodhouse MSS.
- ²⁶ "It is but too well known," he told Richard Shackleton, "that I debate with great vehemence and asperity, and with little management either of the opinions, or persons of many of my adversaries. They deserve not much quarter, and I give and receive very little." (*Leadbeater Papers*, ii, p. 110; April 19th, 1770.)
- ²⁷ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), ii, p. 16.
- ²⁸ Milton MS. (Burke to Wilkes; May, 1766).
- ²⁹ Milton MS. (Wilkes to Burke; undated; probably May, 1766).
- ³⁰ Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 30877, f. 56.
- ³¹ H. Walpole: *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. Barker), iii, p. 4.
- ³² *Works*, i, p. 267 (A Short Account of a Late Short Administration).
- ³³ *Correspondence of the Earl of Chatham* (ed. Taylor and Pringle), iii, p. 110 (Chatham to Grafton; October 17th, 1766). cf. also Prior: *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 96.
- ³⁴ *Corr.*, i, p. 296 (Burke to the Bishop of Chester; 1771).
- ³⁵ *Corr.*, i, p. 104 (June 12th, 1766).
- ³⁶ *Corr.*, i, p. 117 (Burke to the Lord Mayor of Dublin; February 25th, 1767).

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- ³⁷ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ³⁸ *Corr.*, i, p. 111 (Mrs (Mary) Burke to Mrs. Hennesy ; October 25th, 1766).
- ³⁹ *Leadbeater Papers*, ii, p. 99 (Burke to Richard Shackleton ; October 19th, 1766).
- ⁴⁰ cf. Samuels : *Early Life . . . of Edmund Burke*, pp. 396-404.
- ⁴¹ cf. *Leadbeater Papers*, ii, p. 110 (Burke to Richard Shackleton ; April 19th, 1770). Shackleton's letter was printed, anonymously, in the *Saturday Evening Post* of April 14th-17th, 1770.
- ⁴² *Works*, ii, p. 62 (Speech on American Taxation ; April 19th, 1774).
- ⁴³ H. Walpole : *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. Barker), ii, p. 309.
- ⁴⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MSS.

Chapter Three—Private Life

- ¹ *New Monthly Magazine*, xiv, p. 382 (Burke to Garret Nagle, senior ; October, 1759).
- ² Public Record Office, C.O. 104/1. The appointment was dated May 19th, 1763.
- ³ Public Record Office, C.O. 102/1 (p. 237). The appointment was dated April 13th, 1764.
- ⁴ *Corr.*, i, p. 54 (Burke to Richard Shackleton ; July 17th, 1764). In a letter to Richard Shackleton, dated April, 1763, Burke said that his brother's employment was very lucrative. The letter was printed (*Corr.*, i, p. 51) with this passage omitted. The original letter is in the possession of Mrs. Pilgrim, Noyna Mede, Colne.
- ⁵ Barry : *Works*, i, p. 42 (William Burke to James Barry ; March 23rd, 1766).
- ⁶ Barry : *Works*, i, p. 61 (October 7th, 1766).
- ⁷ Barry : *Works*, i, p. 76 (December 3rd, 1766).
- ⁸ Quoted by Prior : *Life of Burke* (3rd edition), p. 121. No date was given.
- ⁹ *Corr.*, i, p. 153 (Burke to Richard Shackleton ; May 1st, 1768).
- ¹⁰ There has been some uncertainty in the past in regard to the exact sum which Burke paid, but this was clearly stated in the course of certain Chancery Court proceedings during the early months of 1768. Burke bought the property from a Mr.

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- William Lloyd, who died before the negotiations were completed, leaving his estate in an encumbered condition. The Court directed that the treaty of sale should be executed. (Public Record Office, C. 12/1604/14.)
- ¹¹ Isham : *Boswell Papers*, Vol. 15, p. 201 (Journal in London ; April 23rd, 1783).
 - ¹² Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke's " Characters " of his brother, son, etc.).
 - ¹³ *Corr.*, i, p. 400 (Edmund Burke to a Prussian gentleman ; 1772).
 - ¹⁴ On June 1st, 1768, Edmund Burke, together with Lord Verney and seven others, is alleged to have signed a letter to the Directors of the East India Company, demanding as Stockholders to be given an explanation of the source of recent rumours which had caused a severe fall in the value of the Stock. cf. Dilke : *Papers of a Critic*, ii, p. 338. It is fair to say, however, that a recent examination of the Court Book which contains the minutes of the Directors' meetings and is preserved at the India Office, discloses no record of Edmund Burke's signature being attached to any such letter. cf. Dixon Wecter : *Edmund Burke and His Kinsmen* (University of Colorado Studies ; No. 1), p. 28.
 - ¹⁵ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (A note on Stock-Jobbing).
 - ¹⁶ From unpublished portions of the Grenville Papers in the possession of Sir John Murray, K.C.V.O.
 - ¹⁷ Charles Lloyd to George Grenville ; August 4th, 1769. The letter is in the possession of Sir John Murray and is preserved among the unpublished portions of the Grenville Papers.
 - ¹⁸ In the above collection of papers there is a letter from Charles Lloyd to George Grenville, dated August 2nd, 1769, in which are set out a few selected examples of the scale on which the Burkes had been gambling. Richard Burke's name stood against one amount of £29,000 of East India Stock, and he was liable for a difference of £10,745 in respect of this one bargain. He was jointly liable with William Burke for a further difference of £1,900 on another bargain, and with a certain Samuel Dyer for a difference of £4,870 on a third bargain. Verney apparently offered to settle these differences. Maclean was liable for a total " difference " of £27,000.
 - ¹⁹ £10,400 was advanced on mortgage by a Mrs. Caroline Williams, and £3,400 by Sir Charles Saunders. cf. Sir J. Napier :

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Edmund Burke—A Lecture (Dublin, 1862). On December 30th, 1800, more than three years after Burke's death, his widow was informed that "the mortgagee" of Gregories was old and infirm. She was warned that as soon as this mortgagee died, her mortgage would be called in, so that it could be distributed agreeably to the provisions of her will (Milton MS.). About the same time Mrs. Burke was threatened with foreclosure by a Mr. Sutton if his mortgage of £1,200 was not paid off in two annual instalments, in conformity with an agreement which had been made (Milton MS. ; undated).

- ²⁰ *Garrick Correspondence*, i, p. 353.
- ²¹ *Corr.*, i, p. 211 (November 6th, 1769).
- ²² *Wraxall: Historical Memoirs*, ii, p. 260.
- ²³ *Corr.*, i, p. 228 (Burke to Richard Shackleton ; August 15th, 1770).
- ²⁴ Public Record Office, C.O. 101/5. (Three petitions addressed by Richard Burke to the Captain General and Governor of the Grenadines, St. Vincent and Tobago, and to the Council of St. Vincent ; July 2nd and July 10th, 1771.) cf. also Pierpont Morgan MS. (A letter from Edmund Burke to Garret Nagle, junior ; August 23rd, 1771).
- ²⁵ *Annual Register*, Chapter VII, pp. 83 ff. (1773).
- ²⁶ Public Record Office, C.O. 102/2 (A caveat to the Treasury issued by Joseph Hickey, attorney to Richard Burke, against the Act lately passed in St. Vincent ; December 10th, 1771).
- ²⁷ Public Record Office, C.O. 101/5 (A Despatch from General Leybourne to Lord Hillsborough ; August 10th, 1772).
- ²⁸ See Appendix 4.
- ²⁹ *Verney Papers* (ed. Lady Verney), ii, p. 277.
- ³⁰ *Barry: Works*, i, p. 196 (December 7th, 1770).
- ³¹ *Memoirs of William Hickey* (ed. Spencer), i, p. 284.
- ³² Milton MSS.
- ³³ H. Walpole : *Last Journals* (ed. Steuart), i, p. 305.
- ³⁴ *New Monthly Magazine*, xiv, p. 529 (July 12th, 1772).
- ³⁵ Public Record Office, C.O. 101/19.
- ³⁶ H. Walpole : *Last Journals* (ed. Steuart), i, p. 419.
- ³⁷ Milton MS. ("The Case of Richard Burke, Esq., formerly Collector of the Customs in the Island of Grenada," addressed to the Lords of the Treasury and dated from Lincoln's Inn ; April 30th, 1785).
- ³⁸ *Brit. Mus. Add. MS.* 29, 232, ff. 311-12.

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- ³⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ⁴⁰ Public Record Office, G.D. 8/118. This extremely long letter is for some reason bound up in a bundle of the Chatham Papers. It was dated December 30th, 1785.
- ⁴¹ *Cornwallis Correspondence*, i, p. 450 (Lord Cornwallis to Lord Rawdon : December 12th, 1789).
- ⁴² Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Memorandum in the handwriting of Edmund Burke).
- ⁴³ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (A letter from Edmund Burke to William Cuppage ; undated).
- ⁴⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke's "Characters" of his brother, son, etc.).
- ⁴⁵ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), i, p. 480.
- ⁴⁶ *Corr.*, i, p. 285 (Burke to the Bishop of Chester ; 1771).
- ⁴⁷ Forster : *Life of Goldsmith*, i, p. 312 and note.

Chapter Four—The Cause of English Liberties

- ¹ *Works*, i, p. 444 (Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents).
- ² Cavendish : *Debates*, i, pp. 378–82 (April 15th, 1769).
- ³ *Works*, i, p. 331 (Observations on a Late Publication, etc.).
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p. 370 (Observations on a Late Publication, etc.).
- ⁵ *ibid.*, p. 398 (Observations on a Late Publication, etc.).
- ⁶ Cavendish : *Debates*, ii, p. 388 (March 12th, 1771).
- ⁷ *Works*, i, p. 437 (Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents).
- ⁸ *ibid.*, p. 470 (Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents).
- ⁹ Journals of the New York Assembly, 11, George III, 36.
- ¹⁰ *Colden Papers*, i, p. 80.
- ¹¹ Journals of the New York Assembly, 14, George III, 91.
- ¹² The offer was made formally to Burke by Sir George Colebrooke "with great concurrence of the whole body of Directors" (*Corr.*, i, p. 339, note 8). Burke was previously sounded in a letter from George Dempster, one of the Directors who was a close friend of William Burke, dated August 4th, 1772 (Wentworth Woodhouse MS.).
- ¹³ H. Walpole : *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. Barker), iv, p. 234.
- ¹⁴ The Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, at that time Vicar of Catterick, was present in the Gallery to hear this debate. He had begun to entertain doubts concerning the divinity of Christ, and his

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future course of action depended upon the issue of the debate. If he could have retained his living and at the same time have found himself relieved from the necessity of subscribing to the Thirty-Nine Articles, he would have been delighted. He deeply resented Burke's speech against the proposed Repeal, and told his friend, Priestley, that Burke had spoken like a Jesuit. He resigned his living, left the Church, and became one of the most eminent of the Unitarian Dissenters (Belsham : *Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey*, p. 162).

- ¹⁵ *Lettres de la Marquise Du Deffand à Horace Walpole* (ed. Mrs. Toynbee), ii, p. 476 (10 Fevrier, 1773).
- ¹⁶ *Works*, iii, pp. 331-2 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ¹⁷ H. Walpole : *Letters* (ed. Toynbee), viii, p. 252 (March 11th, 1773).
- ¹⁸ *Works*, vii, p. 36 (Speech on a Bill for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters).
- ¹⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xvii, p. 819 (March 23rd, 1773).
- ²⁰ H. Walpole : *Letters* (ed. Toynbee), viii, p. 153 (March 5th, 1772).
- ²¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, p. 276 (Lord Chatham to Lord Shelburne ; June 17th, 1773).
- ²² *Parliamentary History*, xvii, p. 454 (April 13th, 1772).
- ²³ *Annual Register*, 1773, p. 64.
- ²⁴ *Corr.*, i, p. 429.
- ²⁵ Brit. Mus. Cavendish MSS. (Bibl. Egerton), Vol. 250, p. 208.
- ²⁶ Richard Cumberland : *Memoirs*, i, p. 369.
- ²⁷ The different accounts of this episode vary in detail. I have collated them, and given that which seems to me the most probable.
- ²⁸ Northcote : *Life of Reynolds*, i, p. 216.
- ²⁹ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), iii, pp. 34-5 and note. Also Forster : *Life of Goldsmith*, ii, pp. 423-7.

Chapter Five—The Cause of America

- ¹ *Works*, ii, p. 72 (Speech on American Taxation ; April 19th, 1774).
- ² For a fuller discussion of this question, cf Namier : *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, pp. 42 ff.
- ³ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), ii, p. 313.
- ⁴ *Corr.*, i, p. 481 (September 16th, 1774).
- ⁵ cf. A. M. Broadley : *Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale*, p. 217.

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- ⁶ The Duke of Richmond wrote, on September 26th, 1774 :
 " After all, we can do no good ; and why should we toil and labour so much in vain ? I grow very sick of politics, but not one jot less affectionate to my friends ; it is impossible to love or esteem you more than I do ; so pray don't look upon this letter as any want of friendship for you." (*Corr.*, i, p. 485.)
- ⁷ Pine : *Poll-Book of the Bristol Election of 1774*.
- ⁸ *Works*, ii, pp. 89-98 (Speech at the Conclusion of the Poll ; November 3rd, 1774).
- ⁹ cf. Owen : *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol*, p. 158 (Quotations from Richard Champion's unpublished Journal and from unpublished correspondence between Burke and Champion).
- ¹⁰ *Works*, ii, p. 117 (Speech on Conciliation with America).
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 126 (Speech on Conciliation with America).
- ¹² *ibid.*, p. 136 (Speech on Conciliation with America).
- ¹³ *ibid.*, p. 179 (Speech on Conciliation with America).
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 181 (Speech on Conciliation with America).
- ¹⁵ *Corr.*, ii, p. 74 (Burke to the Duke of Richmond ; September 25th, 1775).
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 87 (Richmond to Burke ; November 25th, 1775).
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 51 (Burke to Rockingham ; August 23rd, 1775).
- ¹⁸ *Works*, ii, p. 226 (Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol).
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, vi, p. 138 (Burke to Fox ; October 8th, 1777).
- Even at this time Fox had not definitely joined himself to the Rockingham Whigs in a declared union : " My dear Charles," Burke adjured him, ". . . Do not be in haste. Lay your foundations deep in public opinion. Though (as you are sensible) I have never given you the least hint of advice about joining yourself in a declared connection with our Party, nor do I now, yet, as I love that Party very well, and am clear that you are better able to serve them than any man I know, I wish that things should be so kept as to leave you mutually very open to one another in all changes and contingencies ; and I wish this the rather, because, in order to be very great, as I am anxious you should be (always presuming that you are disposed to make a good use of power), you will certainly want some better support than merely that of the Crown."
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 239 (Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol).
- ²¹ *Parliamentary History*, xix, p. 1023.

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- ²² Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke to Champion ; April 11th, 1778). The letter was printed in Burke's *Correspondence* (ii, pp. 210 ff.), but the editors excised this passage.
- ²³ Dilke : *Papers of a Critic*, ii, p. 341. Dilke said that he had found several of these Judgments while searching carelessly, and for another purpose. He found Judgments against William and Richard Burke, jointly, for £1,500 ; against William for £1,760 ; £2,677 10s., and £1,616 13s. 4d. ; against Richard for £72 12s. 6d. There were probably many others.
- ²⁴ *Corr.*, ii, p. 91 (Mrs. Montagu to Edmund Burke ; February 10th, 1776).
- ²⁵ Treloar : *Wilkes and the City*, pp. 193 and 219.
- ²⁶ Milton MS. (undated). In writing to a Mr. Hargrave who had complained that William was responsible for his ruin, Edmund said : " I gave up the last monied stake I had in the world to discharge the engagements which were made solely for your common relief. He himself parted with all he had for the same purpose. He finally parted with his country, and is gone to India. . . ."
- ²⁷ *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (ed. Parkes), ii, p. 103 (June 9th, 1777).
- ²⁸ *Parliamentary History*, xix, p. 1123 (May 6th, 1778).
- ²⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ³⁰ *Corr.*, ii, pp. 281 and 290 (John Curry to Edmund Burke ; August 6th, 1779. Also Anthony Dermott to Edmund Burke ; August 9th, 1779.)
- ³¹ *Parliamentary History*, xx, p. 1297 (December 15th, 1779).
- ³² *Works*, vi, p. 297 (Letter to the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meeting on Parliamentary Reform ; April 12th, 1780).
- ³³ *ibid.*, ii, p. 288 (Speech on the Plan for Economical Reform).
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 291 (Speech on the Plan for Economical Reform).
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 305 (Speech on the Plan for Economical Reform).
- ³⁶ Gibbon : *Miscellaneous Works*, i, p. 156.
- ³⁷ *Parliamentary History*, xxi, p. 233 (March 13th, 1780).

Chapter Six—Office

- ¹ H. Walpole : *Last Journals* (ed. Steuart), ii, p. 306. cf. also De Castro : *The Gordon Riots*, p. 81.
- ² *Corr.*, ii, p. 354 (Burke wrote to Richard Shackleton on June 13th, 1780 : " I thought that if my liberty was once gone and I could not walk the streets of the town with tranquillity, I

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was in no condition to perform the duties for which I ought alone to wish for life").

- ³ *Works*, ii, p. 402 (Speech at Bristol previous to the Election ; September 6th, 1780).
- ⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke to the Duke of Portland ; September 31st, 1780).
- ⁵ *Works*, ii, p. 429.
- ⁶ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (September 7th, 1780).
- ⁷ *Corr.*, ii, p. 383 (Burke to Joseph Harford, Sheriff of Bristol, September 27th, 1780).
- ⁸ See note 4 above.
- ⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xxi, p. 388.
- ¹⁰ cf. an unpublished letter from Burke to the Attorney General formerly in the possession of Mr. G. W. Panter, and sold at Sotheby's in July, 1929.
- ¹¹ Crabbe : *Life and Times of George Crabbe*, i, p. 90.
- ¹² Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ¹³ *Parliamentary History*, xxii, p. 1228.
- ¹⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ¹⁵ "He wants what *I* call principles," Burke noted in an unpublished sketch of Shelburne's character which is preserved at Wentworth Woodhouse, "not in the vulgar sense of a deficiency of honour, or conscience—but he totally **wants** a uniform rule and scheme of life."
- ¹⁶ cf. Owen : *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol*, p. 260 (Quotations from Richard Champion's unpublished Journal).
- ¹⁷ Public Record Office, T. 52, Vol. 71, p. 17.
- ¹⁸ O'Beirne, the future Bishop of Meath, wrote to Edmund Burke from Phoenix Park, Dublin, on August 20th, 1782 : "The Duke has written about your sister's pension in terms becoming the friendship he has for you, and written with an earnestness which, I think, they cannot refuse." Portland was then the outgoing Lord-Lieutenant (Wentworth Woodhouse MS.).
- ¹⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xxiii, p. 917.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 33.
- ²¹ *Works*, iv, p. 276 (Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe ; 1792).
- ²² *Parliamentary History*, xxiii, p. 85 (May 30th, 1782).
- ²³ *Corr.*, iii, p. 14 (Burke to Joseph Bullock ; March 3rd, 1783).
- ²⁴ Trevelyan : *History of England*, p. 557.
- ²⁵ *Corr.*, ii, p. 492.
- ²⁶ Public Record Office (Treasury : King's Warrants), T. 52, Vol. 71, p. 93.

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- ²⁷ It went through on June 5th, 1783. Public Record Office, Patent Roll 23 George III, Part 7 (C. 66/3805), No. 20 ; also Treasury : King's Warrants, T. 52., Vol. 72, pp. 245-6. The Warrant, which was addressed to the Law Officers of the Crown, was dated May 25th, 1783.
- ²⁸ H. Walpole : *Last Journals* (ed. Steuart), ii, pp. 453 ff.
- ²⁹ cf. H. Walpole : *Letters* (ed. Cunningham), ix, pp. 523-4. Mr. W. S. Lewis of Farmington, Connecticut, U.S.A., kindly showed me the original MSS. relating to this business, which are now in his possession. Richard Burke wrote out the full proposition at Horace Walpole's request. He offered, if Sir Edward Walpole would resign the Clerkship of the Pells in his favour, to pay to Sir Edward, as long as they should both remain alive, the entire profits of the place. Richard said that those profits were unlikely to be reduced so long as the present incumbent enjoyed them ; if, however, the nominal ownership were to be transferred to another, it was likely that a reduction would take place, and that Sir Edward would consequently be a loser. To meet this difficulty, and to make the proposal attractive to Sir Edward, the Burkes undertook that one-third of the profits should be paid after Sir Edward's death and during Richard Burke's lifetime to anyone Sir Edward cared to name. Sir Edward Walpole was an invalid of seventy-six and a bad life ; Richard Burke was aged twenty-three and apparently a first-class life. It would obviously have been advantageous to the Burkes to acquire some tangible security in the shape of a future asset with which to confront their creditors. If Sir Edward had acceded to the Burkes' proposal he might have seen the profits of his sinecure reduced during the brief remainder of his life, but he would have acquired the right to bequeath one-third of the reduced profits to anyone he chose for the duration of the lifetime of Richard Burke. The Burkes did not stipulate the nature of the " indisputable security " which they offered for the fulfilment of this condition.
- ³⁰ *Parliamentary History*, xxiii, p. 192 (Speech by Shelburne in the Lords on July 10th, 1782).
- ³¹ *ibid.*, p. 172 (Speech by Fox in the Commons on July 9th, 1783).
- ³² *Works*, vii, p. 104 (Speech on the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament).
- ³³ *Parliamentary History*, xxv, p. 1403 (April 26th, 1786).

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Burke told the House this in the course of a debate on the conduct of Warren Hastings.

- ³⁴ *ibid.*, xxiii, p. 797 (April 25th, 1783).
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 903 and 911.
- ³⁶ cf. Dilke : *Papers of a Critic*, ii, p. 335 (quotations from the *Public Advertiser* during October, 1771).
- ³⁷ Howell : *State Trials*, p. 160.
- ³⁸ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke to Richard Champion ; October 3rd, 1784).
- ³⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ⁴⁰ Isham : *Boswell Papers*, Vol. 15, p. 234 (Journal in London ; May 29th, 1783).

Chapter Seven—The Cause of India

- ¹ *Burke and Laurence Letters*, p. 54 (Burke to French Laurence ; July 28th, 1796).
- ² Milton MS.
- ³ *Corr.*, ii, p. 484 (April 20th, 1782). Part of this passage was excised by the editors, but the original letter is at Wentworth Woodhouse).
- ⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (April 23rd, 1782). Burke warned Rockingham to be careful of Dundas, the Lord Advocate for Scotland, who had "absented himself from the question on Sullivan and the class of Indian delinquents who are the objects of Lord Shelburne's protection and our prosecution."
- ⁵ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (An undated letter from Francis to Walker King, Bishop of Rochester, written some time after Burke's death).
- ⁶ *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (ed. Parkes), ii, p. 18.
- ⁷ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ⁸ *Parliamentary History*, xxi, p. 310 (March 21st, 1780).
- ⁹ *ibid.*, p. 313 (March 21st, 1780).
- ¹⁰ *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (ed. Parkes), ii, p. 288.
- ¹¹ *Works*, ii, p. 512 (December 1st, 1783).
- ¹² *Annual Register*, 1784-5, p. 46.
- ¹³ *Parliamentary History*, xxiii, p. 647 (March 12th, 1783).
- ¹⁴ *Works*, ii, p. 441.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 461.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 534.
- ¹⁷ Public Record Office, G.D. 8/118 (Chatham Papers) (William Burke to Richard Burke, junior ; December 30th, 1785).

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- ¹⁸ William Hickey : *Memoirs*, iii, p. 260.
- ¹⁹ Milton MS. (Richard Burke, junior, to William Burke ; May 16th, 1792).
- ²⁰ He was proposed by the Duke of Devonshire and elected in March, 1783.
- ²¹ Thomas Somerville : *My Own Life and Times*, p. 222.
- ²² cf. Keith Ferling : *The Second Tory Party (1714-1832)*, pp. 158 ff.
- ²³ *Parliamentary History*, xxiv, p. 357 (February 16th, 1784).
- ²⁴ This Bill, together with Burke's sworn answer, was printed by Dilke in *Papers of a Critic*, ii, pp. 367-70.
- ²⁵ cf. *The Verney Papers* (ed. Lady Verney), ii, p. 286.
- ²⁶ *Parliamentary History*, xxiv, p. 939.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 1272 (July 7th, 1784).
- ²⁸ See Note 17 above.
- ²⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xxiv, p. 1413 (January 25th, 1785).
- ³⁰ *Annual Register*, 1780, pp. 207 and 214.
- ³¹ *Annual Register*, 1784-5, p. 197. cf. also *Letters of Junius* (Woodfall Edition), p. 34 (note 1) ; *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* for Friday, July 16th, 1784, and *London Chronicle* for July 15th and 17th, 1784.

Chapter Eight—The Impeachment of Warren Hastings

- ¹ Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. Birkbeck Hill), iv, p. 407.
- ² *Corr.*, iii, p. 3 (Jones to Burke ; April 13th, 1784).
- ³ *Works*, iii, p. 62 (Speech on the Nawab of Arcot's Debts ; February 28th, 1785).
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p. 110 (Speech on the Nawab of Arcot's Debts).
- ⁵ cf. Mervyn Davies : *Warren Hastings*, p. 459 and note.
- ⁶ Stanhope : *Life of Pitt*, i, Appendix, p. xix.
- ⁷ *Parliamentary History*, xxvi, p. 777 (March 22nd, 1787).
- ⁸ cf. an article by Mr. H. V. F. Somerset of Worcester College, Oxford, in *Discovery* for December, 1932. Mr. Somerset had been examining unpublished MSS. at Claydon (the home of the Verneys).
- ⁹ Milton MS.
- ¹⁰ There is evidence among Burke's unpublished MSS. at Wentworth Woodhouse of Edmund's gratitude to Portland for help given to Richard Burke the elder.

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- ¹¹ *Corr.*, iii, p. 78.
- ¹² *ibid.*, p. 80 (July 17th, 1780).
- ¹³ *ibid.*, p. 39-42.
- ¹⁴ *Works*, ix, p. 341 (Speech on Opening-First Day).
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 401 (Speech on Opening-Second Day).
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 456 (Speech on Opening-Second Day).
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 447-55 (Speech on Opening-Second Day).
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 458 (Speech on Opening-Second Day).
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, v, p. 349 (Second Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, ix, p. 482 (Speech on Opening-Second Day).
- ²¹ H. Walpole : *Letters* (ed. Toynbee), xiv, p. 48 (Walpole to Thomas Barrett ; June 5th, 1788).
- ²² Debrett : *History of the Trial of Hastings*, Part I, p. 102.
- ²³ *Creevey Papers* (ed. Maxwell), i, p. 59.
- ²⁴ *Works*, xi, p. 4 (Report on the Lords' Journals) ; also Debrett : *History of the Trial of Hastings* ; also Mallison ; *Hastings*, p. 481.

Chapter Nine—The French Revolution

- ¹ *Parliamentary History*, xxvii, p. 714.
- ² *ibid.*, p. 822.
- ³ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot* (ed. Minto), i, p. 260 (January 10th, 1789).
- ⁴ Historical MSS. Commission : Abergavenny MSS., Vol. 10, Part IV, p. 70 (James Macpherson to John Robinson ; January 29th, 1789).
- ⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xvii, p. 1170.
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p. 1213.
- ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 1247.
- ⁸ Windham : *Diary*, p. 167.
- ⁹ *Works*, x, p. 218 (Speech on the Sixth Article : First Day).
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 307 (Speech on the Sixth Article : Third Day).
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 237 (Speech on the Sixth Article : First Day).
- ¹² *ibid.*, p. 251 (Speech on the Sixth Article : Second Day).
- ¹³ cf. Prior : *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 286.
- ¹⁴ *Corr.*, iii, p. 86.
- ¹⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xviii, p. 68.
- ¹⁶ *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox* (ed. Russell), ii, p. 361 (Fox to Fitzpatrick ; July 30th, 1789).
- ¹⁷ Hardy : *Life of Lord Charlemont*, ii, p. 220.
- ¹⁸ *Corr.*, iii, pp. 102 ff.

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- ¹⁹ *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (ed. Parkes), ii, p. 264.
- ²⁰ *Parliamentary History*, xviii, p. 357.
- ²¹ Prior : *Life of Burke* (3rd edition), pp. 315-16 (undated letters from Burke to Mrs. Sheridan are quoted).
- ²² *Parliamentary History*, xviii, p. 432.
- ²³ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke to Richard Bright—the Chairman of the Committee formed by the three Denominations of Dissenters in Bristol ; May 9th, 1789).
- ²⁴ Lincoln : *English Dissent 1763-1800*, p. 6, note 2 (quotation from "A Scourge for the Dissenters, or Nonconformity Unmasked," 1790).
- ²⁵ *The Anti-Jacobin*, i, p. 629.
- ²⁶ Prior : *Life of Burke* (5th edition), p. 314 (Richard Burke, junior, writing to his father from Brussels in August, 1791).
- ²⁷ *Works*, iii, p. 240 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 274 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 313 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 331 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³¹ *ibid.*, p. 378 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³² *ibid.*, p. 351 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³³ *ibid.*, p. 361 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 397 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 525 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ³⁶ *Corr.*, iii, p. 130 (February 19th, 1790).
- ³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 164 (November 3rd, 1790).
- ³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 137 (February 20th, 1790).

Chapter Ten—The Anti-Jacobin Cause

- ¹ *Works*, iii, p. 308 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ² *ibid.*, iv, p. 319 (Thoughts on French Affairs).
- ³ *ibid.*, iii, p. 335 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ⁴ *ibid.*, iv, p. 165 (Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs).
- ⁵ *ibid.*, vii, p. 134 (Speech on the Repeal of the Marriage Act).
- ⁶ *ibid.*, iv, p. 281 (Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe ; January 3rd, 1792).
- ⁷ *ibid.*, v, p. 349 (Second Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ⁸ *ibid.*, iv, p. 170 (Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs).
- ⁹ *ibid.*, v, p. 134 (Thoughts and Details on Scarcity).
- ¹⁰ *Corr.*, iii, p. 145 (Burke to Captain Mercer, an Irishman who settled near Newry, in County Down, after making a fortune in India ; February 26th, 1790).

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- ¹¹ *Works*, iv, p. 293 (Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe ; January 3rd, 1792).
- ¹² *ibid.*, v, p. 216 (Letter to a Noble Lord).
- ¹³ *ibid.*, p. 187 (Letter to a Noble Lord).
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 377 (Second Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 420 (Third Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 486 (Third Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ¹⁷ cf. Cobban : *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century*, p. 71.
- ¹⁸ *Works*, v, p. 123 (Letter to William Elliot ; May 26th, 1795).
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, iii, p. 314 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, v, p. 121 (Letter to William Elliot ; May 26th, 1795).
- ²¹ *ibid.*, p. 210 (Letter to a Noble Lord).
- ²² *Diary of Madame D'Arblay* (ed. Barrett), ii, p. 90.
- ²³ Historical MSS. Commission : Charlemont MSS., 13th series, Part VIII, p. 194 (Lord Charlemont to Edmund Malone ; June 15th, 1792).
- ²⁴ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot* (ed. Minto), ii, p. 153.
- ²⁵ *Corr.*, iii, p. 181 (Burke to William Windham ; December 21st, 1790).
- ²⁶ Debrett : *History of the Trial of Hastings*, Part III, pp. 31 ff. ; also *Parliamentary History*, xxviii, p. 1229.
- ²⁷ *Works*, iv, p. 17 (Letter to a Member of the National Assembly).
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 43 (Letter to a Member of the National Assembly).
- ²⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xxix, p. 249. According to the *Public Advertiser* the words used by Fox were : " The most glorious fabric ever raised by human integrity since the creation of man."
- ³⁰ *Annual Register*, 1791, p. 114.
- ³¹ *Parliamentary History*, xxix, p. 364.
- ³² Pellet : *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, i, p. 85.
- ³³ cf. unpublished MSS. in the Pierpont Morgan Library.
- ³⁴ Windham : *Diary*, p. 213.
- ³⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xxix, p. 388.
- ³⁶ *Works*, iv, p. 62 and note (Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs).
- ³⁷ Windham : *Diary*, p. 226.
- ³⁸ *Works*, iv, p. 176 (Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs).
- ³⁹ cf. *Corr.*, iii, p. 279 (Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, junior ; August 16th, 1791). The editors excised all reference to this interview from the letter as printed, but the original is preserved at Wentworth Woodhouse.

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- ⁴⁰ *Corr.*, iii, p. 402 (Burke to William Weddele, his fellow-Member for Malton ; January 31st, 1792).
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 233 (Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, junior ; August 9th, 1791).
- ⁴² *ibid.*, p. 274.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 349 (Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, junior ; September 26th, 1791).
- ⁴⁴ *Paradise Lost*, Book V, lines 849-51 and 898 to the end.

Chapter Eleven—Europe at War Again

- ¹ Milton MS.
- ² In the possession of Mr. S. Hodgson (the letter was dated July 3rd, 1797).
- ³ *Corr.*, iii, p. 443.
- ⁴ cf. *ibid.*, p. 502 (this passage was excised by the editors : the original letter is preserved at Wentworth Woodhouse).
- ⁵ Milton MS. (May 16th, 1792).
- ⁶ cf. *Verney Letters* (ed. Verney), 1717-99, ii, pp. 282-6.
- ⁷ Milton MS.
- ⁸ *Parliamentary History*, xxix, p. 513.
- ⁹ *Cornwallis Correspondence*, (ed. Ross), ii, p. 273.
- ¹⁰ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot* (ed. Minto), ii, p. 136.
- ¹¹ *Diaries and Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury* (ed. Malmesbury), ii, pp. 453, 466, 481.
- ¹² *Corr.*, iii, p. 520 (Edmund to William Burke ; September, 1792).
- ¹³ *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox* (ed. Russell), ii, p. 376 (October 12th, 1792).
- ¹⁴ *Corr.*, iv, p. 20 (October 17th, 1792).
- ¹⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xxx, p. 189.
- ¹⁶ *Works*, iv, p. 421 (Remarks on the Policy of the Allies ; October, 1793).
- ¹⁷ *Parliamentary History*, xxx, p. 554.
- ¹⁸ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, (August, 1793).
- ²⁰ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot* (ed. Minto), ii, p. 154 (Sir Gilbert Elliot to Lady Elliot ; July 3rd, 1793).
- ²¹ *Burke and Laurence Letters*, p. 126 (Burke to French Laurence ; February 15th, 1797).
- ²² *Corr.*, iv, p. 162 (October 10th, 1793).

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- ²³ cf. *Burke and Laurence Letters*, pp. 120 ff.
- ²⁴ *Works*, iv, p. 455 (Remarks on the Policy of the Allies).
- ²⁵ *Corr.*, iv, p. 157.
- ²⁶ Wentworth Woodhouse MS.
- ²⁷ *Corr.*, iv, p. 213.
- ²⁸ *Parliamentary History*, xxxi, p. 211 (April 1st, 1794).
- ²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 520 (May 16th, 1794).
- ³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 608 (May 23rd, 1794).
- ³¹ *Works*, xi, p. 158 (First Day : May 28th, 1794).
- ³² *ibid.*, p. 203 (First Day : May 28th, 1794).
- ³³ *ibid.*, p. 221 (First Day : May 28th, 1794).
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 282 (Second Day : May 30th, 1794).
- ³⁵ Debrett : *History of the Trial of Hastings*, Part VII, p. 138.
cf. also *Works*, xii, p. 132 (Sixth Day : June 11th, 1794).
- ³⁶ *Works*, xii, pp. 275-7 (June 14th, 1794).
- ³⁷ Debrett : *History of the Trial of Hastings*, Part VII, pp. 142-3.
- ³⁸ *Works*, xii, p. 394 (Ninth Day : June 16th, 1794).
- ³⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (June 25th, 1794).
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.* (June 26th, 1794).
- ⁴¹ *ibid.* (June 28th, 1794).

Chapter Twelve—The Cause of Ireland

- ¹ *The Windham Papers* (ed. Melville), i, p. 215.
- ² Stanhope : *Life of Pitt*, ii, p. 244.
- ³ *Works*, iv, p. 305 (Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe).
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p. 252 (Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe).
- ⁵ Dublin Castle MSS. (Private and Official Letters 1789-93 ; R. Hobart to Scrope Barnard ; January 25th 1792). For Richard's own account of this episode, cf. *Corr.*, iii, p. 495 (Richard Burke, junior, to William Burke, August 17th, 1792).
- ⁶ Wolfe Tone : *Autobiography* (ed. O'Brien), i, p. 106.
- ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 125.
- ⁸ *Corr.*, iii, p. 535 (Edmund Burke to Mrs. Leadbeater ; September 8th, 1792).
- ⁹ *Life and Times of Grattan* (ed. Grattan), iv, p. 112 (March 8th, 1793).
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 93.
- ¹¹ *Paradise Lost*, Book V, lines 192-5.

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- ¹² *Works*, v, p. 208 (Letters to a Noble Lord).
- ¹³ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (August, 1794).
- ¹⁴ *ibid.* (September 14th, 1794).
- ¹⁵ *ibid.* (French Laurence to Mrs. Crewe ; August 31st, 1794).
- ¹⁶ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (September, 1794).
- ¹⁷ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke's " Characters " of his son, brother, etc.).
- ¹⁸ This unpublished Deed is preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
- ¹⁹ *Corr.*, iv, p. 230.
- ²⁰ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (August 31st, 1794).
- ²¹ Stanhope : *Life of Pitt*, ii, p. 249 (September 19th, 1794).
- ²² *Works*, v, p. 193 (Letters to a Noble Lord on the Attacks upon his Pension).
- ²³ *ibid.*, p. 199 (Letters to a Noble Lord on the Attacks upon his Pension).
- ²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 217 (Letters to a Noble Lord on the Attacks upon his Pension).
- ²⁵ *The Windham Papers* (ed. Melville), i, p. 264.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 267.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 273 (Burke to Windham, October 16th, 1794).
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 278 (Burke to Windham, October 20th, 1794).
- ²⁹ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (Burke to Fitzwilliam ; October 21st, 1794).
- ³⁰ *ibid.* (Burke to Fitzwilliam ; November, 1794).
- ³¹ Milton MS. (Burke to Fitzwilliam ; November 7th, 1794).
- ³² Dublin Castle MSS. Fane collection (Westmorland Papers) ; A long letter from Lord Fitzwilliam to Lord Carlisle ; undated, 1795).
- ³³ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (February 19th, 1795).
- ³⁴ *ibid.*
- ³⁵ *ibid.* (received March 21st, 1795).
- ³⁶ *ibid.* (March 20th, 1795).
- ³⁷ *Works*, vi, p. 375 (Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe ; May 26th, 1798).
- ³⁸ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (September 26th, 1794).
- ³⁹ *Works*, vi, p. 399 (Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, junior ; on the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland ; 1793).

NOTES

Chapter Thirteen—Eclipse

- ¹ *Works*, v, p. 326 (First Letter on a Regicide Peace).
- ² *Diaries and Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury* (ed. Malmesbury), iii, p. 323 (note).
- ³ *Works*, v, p. 164.
- ⁴ Milton MS. (November 14th, 1794).
- ⁵ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (December 13th, 1796).
- ⁶ *ibid.* (March, 1796).
- ⁷ *Burke and Laurence Letters*, p. 54.
- ⁸ Wentworth Woodhouse MS. (August 30th, 1796).
- ⁹ *ibid.* (May 25th, 1796).
- ¹⁰ *Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh* (ed. Mackintosh), i, p. 91.
- ¹¹ *Corr.*, iv, p. 421.
- ¹² *Correspondence of Lord Auckland*, iii, p. 318.
- ¹³ Wilberforce : *Life of William Wilberforce*, ii, p. 211.
- ¹⁴ From the original letter formerly in the possession of Mr. G. W. Panter (May 23rd, 1797).
- ¹⁵ Windham : *Diary*, p. 370.
- ¹⁶ Milton MS.
- ¹⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. lxix, Part I, p. 621.
- ¹⁸ Historical MSS. Commission ; Charlemont Papers ; 13th Report, Part VIII, p. 281 (August 19th, 1797).
- ¹⁹ *Diaries and Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury* (ed. Malmesbury), iii, p. 398 (Canning to Ellis ; July 14th, 1797).
- ²⁰ *Corr.*, i, p. 381 (November 17th, 1772).
- ²¹ *Works*, iii, p. 313 (Reflections on the Revolution in France).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Burke's Character of His Wife

PRIOR printed the following "Character" in his *Life of Burke* (5th edition, pp. 50-1) with a few inaccuracies, and also with the statement that Burke presented it to his wife one morning on the anniversary of their marriage. The Commonplace Book in which it appears is preserved among the Burke Papers at Wentworth Woodhouse, and the last two paragraphs, which Prior omitted, show that the paper was written before Burke's marriage.

"THE CHARACTER OF —"

I intend to give my Idea of a woman ; if it at all answers any Original I shall be pleased ; for if such a person really exists as I would describe, she must be far superior to my Description, and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought.

She is handsome, but it is a Beauty not arising from features, from Complexion and Shape. She has all these in a high degree, but whoever looks at her never perceives them, nor makes them the topic of his Praise. 'Tis the Sweetness of Temper, Benevolence, Innocence and Sensibility which a face can express, that forms her beauty. . . .

Her Eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases ; they command, like a good man out of office, not by authority, but by virtue. . . .

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Her Stature is not tall. She is not made to be the admiration of everybody, but the happiness of one.

She has all the Delicacy that does not exclude firmness.

She has all the Softness that does not imply weakness. . . .

Her Smiles are—inexpressible.

Her Voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public Assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a Company from a Crowd. It has this advantage : you must come close to her to hear it.

To describe her body describes her mind : one is the transcript of the other. . . .

She discovers the right and wrong of things not by Reasoning, but by Sagacity. . . .

She has a true generosity of Temper. The most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality ; the most covetous not more cautious in their Distribution.

No person of so few years can know the world better. No person was ever less corrupted by that Knowledge. . . .

She does not run with girlish eagerness into new friendships which, as they have no foundation in Reason, serve only to multiply and embitter Disputes. It is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed for ever, and the first hours of Romantic friendships are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. . . .

Who can see and know such a Creature, and not love to Distraction ?

Who can know her, and himself, and entertain much hope ? ” E. B.

APPENDIX TWO

Burke's Connection with the Annual Register

I HAVE investigated the details of Burke's connection with the *Annual Register*, and I am grateful to Mr. Thomas Copeland of Yale University, Newhaven, Connecticut, for an unpublished paper which he kindly sent me upon this subject. The first number of the *Annual Register* dealt with the events of 1757, and appeared in the year 1758. Burke continued to hold the editorship for thirty-two years, resigning it finally in the year 1790. Burke was paid, during the early years of his editorship, at the rate of £100 a year, and from a letter written by Burke to Dodsley on February 9th, 1764 (Brit. Mus. Add. 1764, 22130, f. 10) it is clear that in 1764 he was still being paid at this rate. When his Parliamentary duties became pressing, Burke felt the need for some assistance, and about the year 1767 he was joined by Thomas English, an intimate friend. James Crossley, the antiquary, wrote to *Notes and Queries* in 1851 (1st series, iii, 441) to say that he had seen the receipts which English gave Dodsley in respect of his salary for each of the years from 1767 to 1791. English was paid at the rate of £140, and later £150 a year. It seems very possible, therefore, that 1767 was the year in which Burke's salary for editing the work was increased from £100 to £300 a year. The *Annual Biography and Obituary*, for 1818, in a note about a certain Dr. William Thomson, stated that "Towards the end of his life the Doctor was chiefly employed in

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bringing up to date the long arrears of Dodsley's *Annual Register*. Of this employment he was not a little proud, for he now considered himself the legitimate successor of Edmund Burke. We understand that he compiled the historical part from 1790–1800 inclusive, and if paid as liberally as the Right Honourable gentleman just alluded to, his remuneration would exactly have amounted to £3,000 for ten volumes."

After the year 1767, when English joined Burke, the average length of the annual historical article shot up from fifty to ninety pages of close-set, double-columned type. In 1775 Burke suffered a serious breakdown in health, due to overwork, and this delayed the appearance of the *Annual Register* for 1774. English and he were then joined by Walker King, the tutor and friend of Burke's son, and thereafter the average length of the annual historical article shot up from ninety to two hundred pages. When Walker King began to turn his attention increasingly to the Church (he later became Bishop of Rochester) his place on the *Annual Register* was taken by French Laurence, another of Burke's young men (cf. a note by Henry Cotton, author of the *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae* in *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, xii, 171 ; 1855). French Laurence was Burke's most intimate associate and fellow-worker from the time of Hastings' Trial until Burke's own death. After the death of Burke's son, in 1794, Laurence became Burke's *alter ego*, and the *Dictionary of National Biography* says of him that he evinced a mind so dominated by Burke's influence as almost to have parted with its independence. During the later years of Burke's editorship the *Annual Register* fell into serious arrears which were never made good during his lifetime. The issue for 1783 was more than a full year late, and that for 1784 never appeared at all. An issue dated 1784–5, and intended to cover

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two full years, finally appeared in 1787 with profuse apologies. The editors explained, in its preface, that they hoped to catch up their schedule by this manœuvre, but each of the issues for 1786, 1787 and 1788 was considerably more than a year late in appearing. The issue for 1789 was more than two full years late, for it did not appear until 1792, long after Burke had resigned the editorship. After Burke resigned the congestion became considerably worse, and when he died in July, 1797, the issue for 1792 had not appeared.

APPENDIX THREE

Burke's Interest in Clogher

GARRET BURKE, Edmund's elder brother, died unmarried in April, 1765. He left to Edmund his interest in a small property known as Clogher, or Clohir, in Co. Cork. This property had been acquired by Garret Burke on a nine hundred and ninety-nine years' lease, in order to protect the interest of his mother's family, the Nagles, who had held the land from Lord Doneraile. Being Catholics the Nagles were at that time precluded, under the Penal Code, from holding land for any term longer than thirty-one years. Moreover they would have been liable to be dispossessed at any time by some unscrupulous member of the family who might decide to turn Protestant, in order, under the provisions of the Penal Code, to claim the whole property for himself. To avert this danger, a dummy Protestant "discoverer" was put up, by means of a friendly connivance; he acquired the property, and immediately transferred it to Garret Burke, in July, 1757. Garret, who was of a cautious and timid disposition, had declined for a long time to meddle in this affair, but he was induced to do so at last on the urgent entreaties of his relatives. Edmund, after his brother's death, continued to act Garret's part, and to hold Clogher on trust for the Nagles as part of a private family arrangement. Edmund was on intimate terms throughout his life with all his mother's family, many of whom were indebted to him for frequent acts of

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kindness. While he was in Ireland during the late summer of 1766 he saw everyone who was concerned, and heard their own statement of the understanding which had existed between the Nagles and his brother.

In 1777 a certain Robert Nagle, who had turned Protestant, attempted, unsuccessfully, to claim for himself the whole property at the expense of the other members of the family. Edmund, naturally, declined to have anything to do with such a scoundrel, but some of Edmund's enemies insinuated in the public Press that he, and his brother Garret, had in fact appropriated to themselves, at Robert Nagle's expense, a trust of this peculiarly delicate nature. C. W. Dilke, in Volume II of his *Papers of a Critic*, lent countenance to this slander; it is, however, certainly a false one. On taking over Clogher, Garret had advanced the Nagles a substantial sum of money, and in July, 1790, Edmund made the property over to his cousin, and intimate friend, Vice-Admiral (Sir) Edmund Nagle, for £3,000. It is inevitable that a few of the details of this complicated business should be obscure, but the best account was given by Sir James Napier in a lecture on Edmund Burke which he delivered before the Dublin Y.M.C.A. in April, 1862 (pp. 50-7). There is a copy of this lecture, which was published in Dublin, in the British Museum. cf. also Prior: *Life of Burke* (3rd edition), p. 96.

APPENDIX FOUR

The Burkes' Land Purchase in St. Vincent

EXTRACT from an unpublished letter written by Edmund Burke to Lord Rockingham, preserved among the Burke Papers at Wentworth Woodhouse :

“ 21 September, 1773.

. . . The total want of all news, or even speculation and conjectures, will excuse me for filling my paper with such matters as only concern the little circle of my family. Since I wrote to your Lordship a good deal has been agitated, indeed rather agitated than done, about the Business of St. Vincent. It has been on the point of being brought to an happy issue and then, almost immediately, thrown off to a great distance, complicated with new matter, and involved in new difficulties. It is now upwards of three weeks ago since Lord North sent for Charles Fox and told him he had found a means of accommodating him in the matter of the Caribbee purchase. He proposed that at the next meeting of the Treasury my brother's Petition should be called for, and rejected. But at the same time his idea was to make General Monckton a grant of those very Lands, with an understood condition that he was to dispose of them to the Petitioner at such a sum as would answer the ideas of the Treasury in providing a reward for him conformably to the Act of Parliament, and yet leaving the object sold a bargain of very great value to the Purchasers. When Fox asked Lord North

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how far his idea of the recompense intended to General Monckton extended, he told him to little more than Ten Thousand Pounds.

Your Lordship will easily imagine that we were as much pleased with the substance of this proposition, as we were dissatisfied with the particular mode of carrying it into execution. The idea of engrafting the reward to Monckton upon the original purchase was by no means to be rejected, and for very obvious reasons. Besides, as it was a scheme which occurred to Lord North without any suggestion on our part, it was probable that he would pursue it with the predeliction which a man has always to his own project. His manner indeed of doing it was exceedingly exceptionable. On a little consultation it occurred to my brother to reverse the plan, and instead of rejecting the Petition, that the Treasury should accept the offers of composition made by him, and that the moneys arising from that composition should be granted to General Monckton. Here the whole transaction would be clear, open, simple, and to be avowed to the world. In the other way it would have all the air of a jobb. To reject not only the title of the Purchasers, so to reject it as to refuse all composition, and immediately afterwards clandestinely to condition the sale to the very person whose pretence to title had been entirely damned, could not possibly bear a good appearance to the world. It was evident too, that the project would produce difficulties that, in the method proposed by my brother, could have no existence. The moment the extensive grant of these Lands, extensive beyond his hopes, was offered to Monckton, he would naturally rather consider what he seemed to give away than what he got. If a limited sum were proposed he would easily acquiesce. But the sale of Lands, when once given to him, for a

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consideration far inferior to their value, would appear (however unreasonably) a matter of hardship and injustice.

These sentiments, in which we were fully agreed here, we communicated in a letter to Charles Fox, and prayed him to make Lord North fully sensible of the weight of them. However, before Fox had an opportunity of seeing him, he began to carry his own project into execution. He did it in a manner so crude, so unguarded, so boyish, that to this minute I stand amazed how a man but two days acquainted with mankind or their business could have acted as he did. Instead of conversing with Monckton, as an affair of delicacy required, he wrote him a letter. In this letter he lays open to him the whole of his scheme as confidentially as he had done to Charles Fox, informs him of his intention to reject the Petition, proposes to him the grant of the Lands, mentions his desire of his selling them to my brother, and so far as we can learn, makes no mention of any specific sum.

In consequence of this astonishing way of doing business, a Scotch gentleman, Mr. Duncan Clarke, who has great influence and authority with General Monckton, came to my brother and acquainted him with the offer made to his friend by Lord North, but letting him know that he did not see how he could be served by the proposed sale, as General Monckton had conceived highly of the value of his grant and did not mean to part with it for less than its full value. Nothing less could be expected from Lord North's incredible weakness in putting himself in the power of another by offering a grant which he could not easily recall, and upon conditions which he could not enforce. My brother declined the interview with General Monckton, as he had only an *ex parte* representation of the affair,

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and resolved to commit himself for nothing until he should see Fox.

But at this visit a transaction came to light which totally alters the whole position of the Business, both with regard to General Monckton, and to my brother. Duncan Clarke had procured a sort of map of the island, by which it appears that the whole land purchased by my brother from the Red Caribbees is assigned to the Black by the late Treaty. This assignment of one of those Lands for the other is the whole effect of that glorious Caribbee War.¹ There is no doubt that as the War, so the Treaty is wholly the manufacture of Sir William Young and his Commissioners—to oust my brother from his Lands, and to make a jobb for his friends out of those that belonged to the Black. This my brother saw very clearly, but said nothing of it to Mr. Clarke. We do not find that this article of the late Treaty is yet executed.

Just as the plot of a comedy thickens a little before the unravelling, in the nick of this discovery arrives Sir William Young, and is hardly arrived before he gets in with Monckton and Dalrymple, the latter of whom, as well as the former, is looking for a grant of land in St. Vincent's.

As soon as my brother had seen Clarke, we immediately sent to Kingsgate for Charles Fox, who came hither last Thursday. He is gone down to see Lord North into Somersetshire, with a strong representation of the injustice of granting away (without even any political reason or principle) the Lands of the Red Caribbees *pendente lite*, and while a negotiation was carrying on with the Treasury upon the subject. It proposed an

¹ The Caribbees rose in defence of their lands, and there was some sharp fighting before the exchange of territories was carried out in accordance with the decision of the authorities in England.

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alternative either of leaving the Black Caribbees in their old settlements and executing Lord North's first idea on our plan ; or to receive satisfaction from an equal grant in the quarter of the Black Caribbees which had been acquired to the Crown at the expence of my brother's purchase.

This is the state of the matter at present, extremely complicated and full of difficulties. The only way out of it seems to be the overset of the act of violence by which my brother was meant to be dispossessed. What Fox can do with Lord North on the one hand and with Sir William Young on the other remains to be seen. I see that Monckton, by forming extravagant expectations, will get little, perhaps nothing, for himself, but a great deal for Duncan Clarke, and perhaps Sir William Young.

I beg a thousand pardons of your Lordship for detaining you with the tedious details of this vexatious Business. I confess I have it much at heart, as it seems the only way out of other business, not less vexatious, nor shall I give up all hope until the final blow is given. . . .”

APPENDIX FIVE

Burke and Fitzwilliam

THE following letter shows that the relation which had once existed between Burke and Rockingham was continued between Burke and Rockingham's heir, Fitzwilliam. The ties which held the Rockingham Party together were intimate and personal, and the salary which Burke received as the nominal manager of the Party was paid to him very informally before 1782 by Rockingham and after 1782 by Fitzwilliam and Portland. The letter is preserved among the Burke Papers at Wentworth Woodhouse :

“ Beaconsfield.

21 November 1791.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have received with the proper sentiments, though I can never match with the proper expressions, the new mark you have given me in your letter of the 15th of your persevering and unconquerable friendship. No heart can be more truly filled than mine is with an affectionate and grateful sense of all that is past and all that you desire to continue between us. Believe me, my dear Lord, the day I had taken the resolution which your unparalleled goodness wishes me to alter, I did not act from the smallest particle of picque, jealousy or resentment. God forbid. It would have been absurd, unjust, unnatural.

In one thing I am obliged a little to disagree with your Lordship ; if political views had been an ingredient

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in your original kindness, as you never had political views which did not arise from so many virtues as you had purposes, instead of derogating from your honour it would in my poor judgement, have rather added to it. It could never make you look the less in your own eyes that in being solidly useful to a friend you added strength to a service which you thought intimately connected with the publick welfare. I for my part would not have felt myself lowered in my own opinion in being thought a person willing to be serviceable to such a cause and capable of being so. Bitter enmities have arisen out of Politicks. It would be a reflection upon mankind if dear and lasting friendships were not sometimes to arise from the same source. I confess I did believe that my industrious zeal in the publick service was one motive (not the sole motive ; there are others more flattering to my heart) to the share I had in your Lordship's regard and esteem. If, wearied and wasted out in that service, overpowered with years, and with a very near prospect of a rapid increase of the infirmities of body and mind which attend the close of Life ; if, in those circumstances one of the wisest and worthiest of my fellow-labourers was willing to make my retreat easy to me I should be as happy to owe the repose of my declining years to friendship as to fortune.

You see, my Lord, that in declining to profit of your partiality, I had not the smallest idea that in taking advantage of it I had formerly disgraced either your Lordship or myself. But it has pleased God that things should take a very unexpected turn. Instead of being suffered to retire with credit and with a kind acknowledgement of service, my retreat has been imperiously ordered. An attempt has been made by that Party (in which I had acted, I am sure with zeal, and I think with judgement, to the hour of my public condemnation) to

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affix an eternal stigma to my good name so far as it was in their power to brand me. In that situation, I appeal to the equity and candour inseparable from your nature to judge whether thus *publicly* condemned I can continue to receive *privately* a favour of any kind from one of the chiefs of the Party which has thought proper, uncontradicted by anyone from that day to this, to describe me in the manner in which I have been described. I confess I cannot bear to appear to myself in the light of a pardoned criminal, who receives something as an alleviation of his punishment and as a compensation for his disgrace. My ever dear and honoured friend, this sacrifice, great to me in every light is not made to pride or popular opinion. But they who give up their self-estimation give up everything.

Let me say (I have examined myself and I can say it with truth) that no consideration of personal reputation, feeling or interest affects me in any degree equally with the entire revolution which has taken place in the Party, by which it has wholly changed its character, its principles and the foundation on which it stood. That Party always had, from fools and knaves the reproach, from honest and wise men the estimation, of being an aristocratick Party. Such I always understood it to be in the true sense of that word ; that is to say, a Party grave and moral, equally removed from popular giddiness and profligacy on the one hand, and from servile Court compliances on the other. This aristocratick character, I thought, formed for that Party, in and out of power, a ground of confidence with all the thinking part of the nation ; and my opinion was that, as men of activity and parts should be successively joined to the Party, they were to adopt that spirit. These opinions, I endeavoured to maintain in my two obnoxious Books (the Reflexions and the Appeal) and in whatever else

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I have written concerning the Grand Revolution in human affairs which has begun in France. I must add that there were few indeed of the Party from whom I had not received either a written or an explicit verbal declaration of their perfect satisfaction in the first of these Books, and an assurance that they considered the publication not only highly seasonable and highly serviceable to the publick, but eminently honourable and useful to the Party, and this tone they continued, until the word was given them to change it.

The leaders have ever since gone on, and are with all their might going on, to propagate the principles of French levelling and confusion by which no house is safe from its servants, no officer from his soldiers, and no State or Constitution from conspiracy and insurrection. I will not enter into the baseness and depravity of the system they adopt, but one thing I will remark, that its great object is not (as they pretend to delude worthy people to their ruin) the destruction of all absolute monarchies, but totally to root out that thing called an aristocrat, or nobleman and gentleman. This they do not yet profess, but in France they profess it and do it ; and the Party here spare no pains to magnify all that is done there and to propagate its principles. They gain ground daily in the Party, and through the Party in the nation. They have two agents of the National Assembly, one at Paris and one here whom the Party pays, or has lately paid, whose sole business it is, in a paper to which the Party has given patronage and an amazing circulation, to spread opinions from French publications (such as the dialogue from Volnay, etc. etc) which can have no other effect than to root out all principles from the minds of the common people and to put a dagger into the hands of every rustick to plunge into the heart of his landlord.

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I believe that having obtained one of their objects which, trivial as it is, they have had many years at heart, to drive me out of the public service under obloquy, they may in future be a little more cool and guarded. But I know they are not a jot more disposed to alter their opinions, or the spirit of their proceedings, which latter, by being better measured, may become more dangerous. Who can resist their doctrines, when no man in the Party of a different opinion can look for his greatest objects elsewhere than to those who countenance no other than the disciples of that system ; when no power exists which can save from the ban of the Party any member of it who shall be, as I have been, bold enough to set forth anything, in speaking or writing, against what is done in France for a Pattern to the world, or against the principles upon which that Francization has proceeded ?

Now my dear Lord, judge me fairly. I will tell you simply what in this situation I mean to do, unless I see great reason to change my mind. The business of Hastings' prosecution I cannot abandon. My stay in Parliament will not be one hour after that business is closed. The time to its conclusion, though I hope short, appears to me as long as it can do to Mr. Fox, or Mr. Fitzpatrick, or Mr. Sheridan, or Mr. Windham, or Mr. Church, or Mr. Pelham, or Mr. Francis, or whoever else is the most ardent admirer of the French system. My intention, almost a resolution, is during that painful interval not to intermeddle with any political matter, except it relates to some change in this Constitution, or that by bringing in French questions I am called upon not to fly from my ground, as if the success of that scheme made me ashamed of the ideas I had formed in relation to it. It is impossible to say what changes may take place—but neither with the Ministers nor

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with the new-modelled Whigs will I act, or take any employment whatsoever. My sense of what I owe to myself prevents me from the first, as well as my abhorrence from giving a moment's disgust to the two best friends which ever any man has had the happiness to possess. My principles, my honour, my conscience, my feelings, will I hope effectually guard me from having any connexion with the latter. In this situation surely your Lordship does not think it would become me when, before the Session is three days old, I may be called to speak strong things against them whom you honour with your confidence and regard, or when, from the depth of my retreat, I may be again impelled to put my pen to paper in a manner not less disagreeable than any I have yet wrote in, that it would be proper or decent for me to continue to receive large pecuniary assistance from one of the most considerable and respectable individuals of that Party, whose cause and interest I was, at the same time, perhaps injuring in the most essential manner? To be sure, the fact is known only to my own family, your Lordship and the Duke of Portland. But the operation of *honour* (as separated from *conscience* which is not as between man and man but between man and God) is to suppose the world acquainted with the transaction, and then to consider in what light the wise and virtuous would regard it. I am sure that such men would never justifie my conduct. You see, my dear Lord, that I do not go upon any difference concerning the best method of preventing the growth of a system which I believe we dislike in common. I cannot differ with you because I do not think *any* method can prevent it. The evil has happened ; the thing is done in principle and in example ; and we must wait the good pleasure of an Higher Hand than ours for the time of its perfect

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accomplishment in practice in this country and elsewhere. All I have done for some time past, and all I shall do hereafter, will only be to clear myself from having any hand, actively or passively, in this great change. My dear Lord, continue your goodness and partiality to me, and let me cultivate as long as I live your society and friendship. I shall have infinite satisfaction in finding when I pay my respects to you in London that you still continue your old partiality to me. Believe me there is one way in which I deserve it, and that is the most sincere and zealous affection, the most perfect esteem, and the warmest gratitude to you. These sentiments will never alter in whatever way or under whatever circumstances the remaining thread of my life may be drawn out.

I am with the most cordial attachment,

My dear Lord,

Your ever faithfull and ever obliged humble servant

EDMUND BURKE.

Of course your Lordship will throw this letter into the fire after you have perused it—except you will first show it to the Duke of Portland from whom I have hitherto concealed nothing, nor ever wish to keep anything secret. Mrs. Burke gives your Lordship and Lady Fitzwilliam a thousand thanks for your attention to her. Within these few days she is much better.”

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

THERE is no standard edition of the works of Edmund Burke, and I have therefore used that which seemed to me the most convenient. The notes in the text refer to the twelve-volume edition published in Boston (U.S.A.) in 1865-7 and subsequently reprinted.

The principal manuscript sources which have been consulted are as follows :

The Burke, Rockingham and Fitzwilliam Papers at Wentworth Woodhouse.

The Burke and Fitzwilliam Papers at Milton.

The Public Record Office and the British Museum.

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

The following editions of Burke's Correspondence have been used :

Burke's Correspondence, edited by Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke (1844).

Burke's Correspondence with French Laurence (1827).

Burke's Correspondence with William Windham (Roxburghe Club ; 1910).

Further Correspondence of Edmund Burke can be found scattered in a great variety of publications. Some of it was collected a few years ago by Messrs. Faber for a projected edition of the Correspondence which never materialized. I am grateful to Messrs. Faber for their courtesy in allowing me to use this material. Large numbers of unpublished letters of Edmund Burke survive in private hands.

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